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The Life of Shelley
from Medwin's revised copy.

Oxford: Horace Hart
Printer to the University



*Me - who am as a worm on which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth*

The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley

By Thomas Medwin

A New Edition printed from a copy copiously amended
and extended by the Author and left
unpublished at his death

With an Introduction and Commentary by

H. Buxton Forman, C.B.

Humphrey Milford
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TO ALFRED WILLIAM FORMAN.

MY DEAR ALFRED,—My earliest recollections are of digging on the sands at Teignmouth, between the sea and those red cliffs now bastioned by Brunel's long sea-wall, and of gathering wild convolvuluses at the foot of the cliffs before the railway was there. I was little more than a year and a half old then; and my guide, philosopher, and friend was my elder brother, you, some three years and a half old. It has been a less joyful digging and flower-culling, on a shiftier and more uncertain strand, this in which you have been helping me round about the footings of Tom Medwin's *Life of Shelley*. Still I have enjoyed it; and I believe you have. I know, at all events, that your learned and brotherly assistance has been of great value to me; and I am venturing, without your leave, to make this confession publicly, and to dedicate whatever is mine in the following pages to you.

H. B. F.

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INTRODUCTION.

MEDWIN'S Life of Shelley contains so much about Medwin himself that a separate memoir of him would be a superfluity in the work which is assuredly his best title to remembrance. But there are a few points which call for some further remark than the foot-notes afford. To deny him the rank of a good biographer would be mere platitude. He has none of the qualifications; but he had extraordinary opportunities of aggregating material concerning two of the great poetic lights of the nineteenth century; and, although he obtained much of that material in the spirit of a shiftY adventurer, there the data are for others to scrutinize and sift and employ to the profit of Shelley and Byron students. Hence, although Mr. Rowland Prothero repeats with pardonable gusto ¹ the opinion which Scrope Berdmore Davies attributed to Captain Hay—that Medwin was “a perfect idiot,” there is no more chance of eliminating him from the story of Byron and Shelley than there is of effectively cashiering Moore from Byronic service or disservice, albeit Moore had genius of his own to back him while Medwin had none.

Mere want of genius or even of biographic instinct or any other conspicuous talent is not sufficient qualification for the *rôle* of “perfect idiot” even among the brilliant minor personages whose phantoms still haunt the figures of Shelley and Byron. There is not one of Medwin's

¹ Byron's Letters and Journals, vi, 202.

works, it is true, that would have gained him any permanent place in English literature, save for his assiduity and perseverance in collecting unpublished work and recording conversations and incidents which cannot be ignored by critics and competent biographers and editors. Even as a translator of Æschylus his work is moribund if not dead, though fifty years ago classical scholars referred to him as if he were one of themselves. If hereafter his six by no means contemptible translations are dug up and republished, it will not be because they fail to be superfluous in Æschylean literature, but because, having studied some of them with his august cousin in Italy, Medwin may claim to have caught an occasional whiff of the aroma that hung round Shelley's *vivâ voce* renderings,—may, with that portentous though inexact memory of his, have preserved such whiffs for the occasion that ultimately arose when he found a magazine editor ready to print *in extenso* his versions of six Æschylean tragedies.¹

Meanwhile Scrope Berdmore Davies the brilliant had very properly gone below the horizon so long that his resurrection in London in 1851 lends pathos to a page in the *Recollections of a Long Life*² in which his intimate friend and fellow traveller of thirty-five years earlier (when John Cam Hobhouse) tells how he met a little unrecognizable old man who, accosting him in the street, had to recall himself to his once intimate friend's memory as Scrope Davies, the associate of giants, the ruined gambler, still forced to live abroad, still holding his fellowship of King's College, Cambridge, but evidently not long for this world either in England or elsewhere.

No! Medwin, wanting brilliancy in every particular,

¹ On this subject see pp. 242-3 and 497-8 *post*.

² Vol. vi, p. 282.

was more of a sharper than an idiot, albeit a sharper with a certain bluntness of intellect incompatible with the production of really high work. Although, to apply to him a phrase which Edward Fitzgerald applied to himself, Medwin was "one of the most translatingest men alive," he did not truly excel in that occupation; although he wrote much of what courtesy calls original verse, he was no poet; although he composed a three-volume narrative of modern life,¹ he cannot be called a novelist; although he had some appreciation of the great in art and letters, he was not a critic; and although he printed, and revised, and rewrote once more, and revised yet again Shelley's biography, the last verdict I have seen on him is that his *magnum opus*, the 1847 *Life*, the one known to his latest assailant, is "a bad book, full of inaccuracies."²

Taking "full" in its colloquial sense, no one can dispute the truth of this summary. The *Life of Shelley*, unregenerate as Mr. Waterlow appears to know it, and without a commentary, concerns specialists alone in this twentieth century; but as it last left the author's octogenarian hands, and with such commentary as its numerous faults and flaws necessitate, it can no more be

¹ This attempt attracted some attention at the time. A first sketch of *Lady Singleton* had appeared under the title of *The Sacrifice; or, the Country, Town, and the Continent*, in *Fraser's Magazine*. There was very much less of it there than in the three-volume novel; but it is unlikely that any living being has read it either in the numbers of *Fraser* for November and December 1837, or as subsequently increased in bulk; that it was received with respect by *The Athenæum* as a contribution to the fiction of the Christ-

mas season of 1842 is, however, beyond question; and it is to be gathered that it was classified as to some extent a novel with a purpose, viz. to inveigh against mercenary marriages; and in that crusade Medwin is said to have been surpassed in *The Manœuvring Mother* and other works by contemporary writers.

² *Shelley by Sydney Waterlow, M.A.*, contributed to Messrs. Jack's sixpenny series "The People's Books," 1913.

ignored by serious students than the biographical contributions of Mary Shelley, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Thomas Love Peacock, and Edward John Trelawny.

To Mary, to Hogg, and to Moore, Medwin owes a great mass of his book, having freely plundered Mary's notes and prefaces to her collections of Shelley's poetry and prose, Hogg's inimitable articles in *The New Monthly Magazine*, and Moore's editions of Byron. De Quincey's articles in *Tait's Magazine* yielded him substantial assistance; and from his own books he naturally swept together all he could make available. As to indicating what is new and what old, what is his and what is other people's, he may be called without fear of contradiction the champion defaulter.

There are folk who exaggerate the value of championship. Chatting of athletic championships at one of our Shelley Society Meetings, the late Dr. Furnivall told me he would rather be champion of anything than mediocre as an exponent of anything else:

I recall
The sense of what he said, although I mar
The force of his expressions.

The position is an arguable one, and may be applied to Medwin's case. Last century produced a plethora of bad books that were valuable and of fairly good books with no lasting value. Medwin's distinction is that he left two bad books which were and still are valuable; but whether the *Byron Conversations* and the *Life of Shelley* should be called the two most valuable bad books of the century or the two worst valuable books of the century is a hard point in casuistry. There is a championship at stake, and I should dearly like to have Furnivall's view of the case.

Nobody seems to have affected the personality of Medwin unless we are to except Williams and Jane. There is one unpleasant association from which he may be discharged. He is among those who have been suspected of supplying Browning with an original for the man who did "once see Shelley plain" in the beautiful little poem *Memorabilia*, with its allegorical quatrain—

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no doubt;
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

but that moor, it seems, did not typify any one of the known Shelley circle.

On the occasion of the Browning Centenary *The Daily News and Leader* (13 May, 1912) gave a reminiscence of Mr. W. G. Kingsland, who had from Browning the statement that the person alluded to was a stranger met by the poet casually in a bookseller's shop, who, struck by Browning's expression of countenance on hearing that the man had been spoken to by Shelley, "burst into laughter." Browning said to Mr. Kingsland—"I still vividly remember how strangely the presence of a man who had seen and spoken with Shelley affected me." It will be a relief to many lovers of both poets to know that there is no sneer in *Memorabilia* directed against any of those who hung, usefully enough, to Shelley's skirt—as Medwin, or Hogg, or even Trelawny, none of whom could have been altogether *persona grata* to Browning—although he went in 1844 to Leghorn to see Trelawny, to whom he carried a letter of introduction.¹

¹ "Mr. Browning's main object," records Mrs. Sutherland Orr in her *Life and Letters of Robert Browning*, 1891 (p. 137), "had been, naturally,

to speak with one who had known Byron and been the last to see Shelley alive; but we only hear of the two poets that they formed in

The fourth appendix to this volume will show broadly, to those who would know, how Medwin employed himself in the calling of letters after his return from India as a half-pay lieutenant of dragoons with the nominal rank of Captain. He must have been industrious, and in his slovenly fashion studious, never thoroughly mastering anything, and especially never acquiring the grace to avoid the offence of arrogant detraction from the merits of others.

There is a disparaging allusion to two literary ladies at page 319 which has puzzled many of those who have had to consult the Life, and certainly puzzled me afresh as the new edition passed under my hand. What did the biographer mean by dragging in the "L.E.L.'s and Lady Emmelines of the day" for comparison with Shelley in the matter of poetic or platonic passions? "L.E.L." should not raise any difficulty whether under those her pen initials, or under her maiden name of Letitia Elizabeth Landon or her married name of Mrs. Maclean; but who the Lady Emmeline was to excite the ungallant Captain's spleen was not easy to make out. I had never read anything by any Lady Emmeline; and English books of reference do not record people by their Christian names. But I got a clue from Mrs. Browning's Letters to R. H. Horne,¹ in one of which that sweet lady and glorious poet and critic took her correspondent to task for ignoring in *A New Spirit of the Age* a "poor Lady E" whose poetical work had been acknowledged some years earlier, to Horne's disgust, by

part the subject of their conversation." His strong impression of the cool courage Trelawny displayed under a painful operation carried on during the interview would of itself disqualify Trelawny for the unsuitable position of the man who

did "once see Shelley plain."

¹ *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning addressed to Richard Hengist [sic for Henry] Horne, . . . London: Richard Bentley and Son, . . . 1877* [two volumes].

The Quarterly Review. In Horne's own copy of the Letters the blank after E is filled in manuscript to make *Emmeline*; and so reads the autograph letter. An article in the *Quarterly* on Modern English Poetesses had included the works of Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, formerly Lady Emmeline Manners, an elder sister of Lord John Manners who distinguished himself both in literature and in politics before he succeeded in his old age to the Dukedom of Rutland. While following up that clue it occurred to me to consult the auction catalogue¹ of the Stainforth collection of poetry by women, a collection reputed to have contained everything and anything in verse published by English or American women up to 1866. It is a thoroughly useful work of reference, like many other sale catalogues issued by those eminent auctioneers Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge. I always have it at hand; and this time I turned it over from lot 1 to lot 3076; and it was not till I got to the 160th page that I found the works of Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley duly catalogued as lots 2951 to 2980. Her ladyship being the sole Lady Emmeline named in the Stainforth catalogue, it would have been absolutely safe to assume that here was the list of the devoted lady's works which Medwin and Horne both treated with contumely; and which Horne's illustrious correspondent pronounced worthy of more respect than those of the Marchioness of Northampton, Miss Helen Lowe, Mrs. Clive, and Sara Coleridge put together. Medwin must, surely, have known the *Quarterly* article and been aware of the writing of Miss Barrett as she

¹ *Catalogue of the Extraordinary Library, unique of its Kind, formed by the late Rev. F. J. Stainforth, consisting entirely of Works of British and American Poetesses, and Female Dramatic*

Writers . . . which will be sold by Auction, by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, . . . On Monday, the 1st of July, 1867, and Five following Days . . . 800. pp. iv + 166.

then was in *The Athenæum* and other periodicals. He presumably lotted her up with "the L.E.L.'s and Lady Emmelines of the day"—to his shame; for he never so much as alludes to her anywhere else, though, by the by, she was acquainted with his translation of *Prometheus Bound* published the year before her own first version of that tragedy.

It was to Æschylus that he devoted more time and study than to any of the poets but Shelley and Byron. In a certain limited sense he may be said to have had Æschylus on the brain; and yet he could classify the best-known words of Archimedes as "from some Greek dramatist—probably Æschylus" (page 99 *post*), and could furnish a still more comical case which we may call the duck and drake case, at pp. 90 and 91. There we are told about the "classical recreation" of making "ducks and drakes" to which Shelley is said to have been addicted—not the metaphorical game of wasting his money on Medwin and other unworthy objects of his princely largesse, but the literal game of making stones skim along the water and watching the number of bounds—pronounced "classical" on the strength of "a fragment from some comic drama of Æschylus." I have not been able to verify the existence of such a fragment, whether of Æschylus or of either of the other great Attic dramatists; but my brother Alfred Forman calls my attention to a pretty Latin description of the game in a dialogue (*Octavius*) by Minucius Felix. It is a far cry from that pre-Tertullian early Christian writer to "our Æschylus the thundrous"; but I dropped the enquiry at that point as perhaps near enough for Medwin.¹

¹ In Professor Mackail's *Latin Literature* (5th edition, 1906, p. 250) the scene of the *Octavius* is described, and the missiles used in

It was in 1845 that Medwin wrote from Heidelberg to Charles Ollier of his employment on this his *magnum opus*, and of his need for any material with which Shelley's publisher could furnish him, adding with characteristic slovenliness of expression "I need not say that I shall consider it a matter of course to make you any proportionate remuneration I may receive for the work." He mentions specially letters from Shelley, of which he rightly supposed that Ollier had many, though indisposed to let them out at that time. He deploras the failure to preserve Shelley's letters to himself, which he represents as covering years of their life, and says he lent to Trelawny those written to him by Shelley in Italy, but that he could never get back even these, and did not at the time of his addressing Ollier so much as know where Trelawny was. After Medwin's death some of those letters were published in Trelawny's *Records* (1878, ii. 28-42) more or less imperfectly. The old lion had seen Medwin shortly before the gallant and always impecunious Captain died; and we may rest assured that the matter of the borrowed letters was brought up and squared. The sale of two of them by auction in November 1907 as the property of Mrs. Call (*née* Trelawny) may doubtless be taken as evidence that the legatee of Trelawny's treasures knew those letters were no longer in the category of borrowed property, though it is very improbable that the loan was a mere invention of Medwin's. It is an easier story to accept than one told in the same letter to Ollier clearly intended to inspire him with confidence in Medwin's continuous intimacy with Shelley during the college period of their lives.

the duck and drake playing speci- ammunition for the purpose !
fied as "pieces of tile"—splendid

The words employed, "were at Oxford at the same time," are cunningly enough chosen, as any reader would understand from them that the poet and his biographer were College contemporaries; whereas in the *Life* no such statement is ventured, though Medwin, when annexing Hogg's description of Shelley's rooms, professes to have visited his cousin at Oxford. Also, he tells how Shelley came to him in London when expelled. The late Joseph Foster, in his *Alumni Oxonienses*, does not help the lame phrase "were at Oxford at the same time" over the stile. He gives Medwin's matriculation when 17 years old under the date December 2, 1805, and indicates in his usual negative manner that the hopeful youth left without taking a degree; whereas Shelley did not matriculate till April 1810, and, commencing residence in the Michaelmas term, almost certainly began his brief career at Oxford after Medwin had left College. I wish I could feel assured that there was nothing much more discreditable than this bit of mystification in the biographer's approaches to those likeliest to have materials at command. Among these was Mary Shelley, whose unpublished reply to his application (mentioned in the Appendix, p. 504) is of considerable interest:—

Dear Captain Medwin

Your letter has surprised and pained me—I had no idea that you contemplated the work you mention.

As you remark I had said, the time has not yet come to recount the events of my husband's life. I have done all that can be done with propriety at present. I vindicated the memory of my Shelley and spoke of him as he was—an angel among his fellow mortals—lifted far above this world—a celestial spirit given and taken away, for we were none of us worthy of him—and his works are an immortal testament giving his name to posterity in a way more worthy of him than my feeble pen is capable of doing.

In modern society there is no injury so great as dragging private

names and private life before the world. It is one from which every honourable and upright mind shrinks—and yours does—I am sure, for you have always been careful not to injure others in your writings.—But the life of dear Shelley—the account of the Chancery Suit above all, would wound and injure the living—and especially Shelley's daughter who is innocent of all blame and whose peace every friend of Shelley must respect.

I must therefore in the most earnest manner deprecate the publication of particulars and circumstances injurious to the living. That such is the feeling of Shelley's friends their common silence shews. You have been long in Germany and forget what our English world is—when you reflect, I am sure you will feel as we all must do—In these publishing, inquisitive, scandal-mongering days, one feels called upon for a double exercise of delicacy, forbearance—and reserve. If you were to write to Mrs. Hogg on the subject I am sure you will find that her feelings coincide with mine.

I had a severe attack of illness this spring—and both before and since I have been very unwell. I went to Cowes for change of air—and am now on a visit to a friend. My address in town is 24 Chester Square—for the present—but I hope (though disappointed last autumn) very soon to be on my way to Italy—as a Southern climate is absolutely necessary to my health for some little time. I have not been to Horsham for a long long time. As to any sort of writing even a short letter is a most painful effort to me—and I do not know when I have written as much as now.

I am, dear Capⁿ Medwin

Yours truly

M SHELLEY

Following her husband's charming *recipe* for the improvement of inferior people, that, namely, of making them out better than they were, Mary despatched this excellent letter to Medwin; but she failed in her object; for there is not, I fear, any doubt that he attempted to blackmail her by extorting money from her in payment for reticence. This next stage in the case is evident from a letter which she wrote to Leigh Hunt, replying to one received from him on the subject. Her letter was sold at auction a few months ago, and passed into the hands of Messrs. Maggs Brothers of No. 109 in the Strand, who

have included it in a recent catalogue of autographs for sale, quoting the salient sentences. Mary, after avowing her indifference to Medwin's attitude, says—

“An attempt to extort money finds me quite hardened. I have suffered too much from things of this kind not to have entirely made up my mind. I told Mrs. Hogg, because as she had known Captain Medwin it was possible that he might make some sort of Communication to her—but I never dreamt of answering his letter or taking any notice of this threat. The fact is, he couldn't find any bookseller to publish his trash, so he thought, by working on my fears, to dispose of it to me. Unfortunately for his plan and for my own comfort I have had too much experience of this sort of villainy, and his attempt is quite abortive. He may certainly find a bookseller to publish a discreditable work—but really I cannot bring myself to care the least about it.”

Considering all things, that was a fairly brave attitude. Those who read the present volume will see that Medwin did not let his cousin's second wife go unscathed, any more than her father did when he tried to get money from John Taylor of Norwich by writing that villainous letter about her elopement with Shelley edited by me in 1911 for the Bibliophile Society of Boston—in whose privately printed Year Book for that date it appears, and may be read by the curious at the British Museum.

In the foot-note at page 332 (*post*), the reader is cautioned on the subject of *Tait's Magazine* and Medwin's dealings with De Quincey's articles in it. The case of “the Eternal Child” there referred to is an almost incredibly shameless piece of petty larceny. De Quincey, in finishing a brilliant piece of work by way of “Notes” on the portraiture of Shelley by George Gilfillan in *A Gallery of Literary Portraits*,¹ had drawn on his own account an exquisite prose vignette of the poet to set

¹ Tait, Edinburgh, 1845.

against some of his darker visions connected with Shelley's infidelity: he says—

“When one recurs to his gracious nature, his fearlessness, his truth, his purity from all fleshliness of appetite, his freedom from vanity, his diffusive love and tenderness,—suddenly out of the darkness reveals itself a morning of May, forests and thickets of roses advance to the foreground, from the midst of them looks out ‘the eternal child’, cleansed from his sorrow, radiant with joy, having power given him to forget the misery which he suffered, power given him to forget the misery which he caused, and leaning with his heart upon that dove-like faith against which his erring intellect had rebelled.”

Too proud to adorn his picture with three borrowed words and make no acknowledgment, De Quincey filled the foot of Tait's hideous great page with a note in very minute type, giving an extract from the *Literary Portraits*. thus —

“‘The eternal child:’ this beautiful expression, so true in its application to Shelley, I borrow from Mr. Gilfillan; and I am tempted to add the rest of his eloquent parallel between Shelley and Lord Byron, so far as it relates to their external appearance:—‘In the forehead and head of Byron, there is more massive power and breadth: Shelley's has a smooth, arched, spiritual expression; wrinkle there seems none on his brow; it is as if perpetual youth had there dropped its freshness. Byron's eye seems the focus of pride and lust; Shelley's is mild, pensive, fixed on you, but seeing you through the mist of his own idealism. Defiance curls on Byron's nostril, and sensuality steepens his full large lips: the lower features of Shelley's face are frail, feminine, flexible. Byron's head is turned upwards; as if, having risen proudly above his contemporaries, he were daring to claim kindred, or to demand a contest, with a superior order of beings; Shelley's is half bent, in reverence and humility, before some vast vision seen by his own eye alone. Misery erect, and striving to cover its retreat under an aspect of contemptuous fury, is the permanent and pervading expression of Byron's countenance:—sorrow, softened and shaded away by hope and habit, lies like a “holier day” of still moonshine upon that of Shelley. In the portrait of Byron, taken at the age of nineteen, you see the unnatural age of premature passion; his hair is young, his dress is youthful; but his face is old:—in Shelley

you see the eternal child, none the less that his hair is grey, and that "sorrow seems half his immortality".'

Medwin's impudent annexation of all he wanted from this passage, and his slovenly changes in the text, were certainly not the result of idiocy. Indeed his *aplomb* in stealing fine things shows a good measure of mean ability, and the cognate capacity of the creature for spoiling fine things when stolen was almost unbounded. A shocking example of this gift of his is his treatment of the letter of Shelley to Peacock, written at Naples on the 22nd of December 1818, opening with that luminous account of the causes which had led to the misanthropic tone of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Prose Works, vol. iv, page 60, and Ingpen's Collected Letters, vol. ii, pages 650-1).

Thus Shelley:—

"I entirely agree with what you say about Childe Harold. The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself. I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one. Nothing can be less sublime than the true source of these expressions of contempt and desperation. The fact is, that first, the Italian women with whom he associates are perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon—the most ignorant, the most disgusting, the most bigoted; countesses smell so strongly of garlic, that an ordinary Englishman cannot approach them. Well, L. B. is familiar with the lowest sort of these women, the people his gondolieri pick up in the streets. He associates with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of man, and who do not scruple to avow practices, which are not only not named, but I believe seldom ever conceived in England. He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself; and contemplating in the distorted mirrors of his own thoughts the nature and the destiny of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair? But that he is a great poet, I think the address to Ocean proves. And he has a certain degree of candour

while you talk to him, but unfortunately it does not outlast your departure. No, I do not doubt, and for his sake I ought to hope, that his present career must end soon in some violent circumstance."

A reference to page 257 of this volume will show that Medwin quotes in inverted commas as from this invaluable passage as follows:

[1] "The spirit in which it is written, is the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth." [2] "It is a kind of obdurate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself." [3] "I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things arises." [4] "He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself; and contemplating in the distorted mirror of his own thoughts, the nature and duty of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair?"

That is all; and in that comparatively insignificant all he not only garbles the text by leaving out of the first sentence the words *if insane*, substituting *obdurate* for *obstinate* in the second, omitting the essential word *alone* from the third, and substituting *nature and duty* for *nature and the destiny* in the fourth; but also, instead of frankly quoting Shelley's verdict on Byron's magnitude as a poet, pretends to have dug out the opinion from the Sonnet "If I esteemed thee less," &c. These peccadillos, however, are as nothing compared with the total omission of the main basis on which Shelley concurred with Peacock in condemning the *Childe Harold* tone of mind.

Inaccuracy, indeed, dogs the steps not only of the gay deceiver himself but of those who, following him, sometimes succeed in tripping him up and sometimes suffer discomfiture from insufficient care to avoid being tripped up by his light-hearted and heavy handed dealings with the skipping rope. Take for example the matter of the Bartolini bust—the bust of which Byron wrote to Murray

as representing "a superannuated Jesuit," and depreciated and tabooed in several other delightful phrases. Medwin got that bust inserted in the form of an engraving by Robert Cooper in some of the 1824 octavos of the *Conversations of Lord Byron*—whether to thwart the great dead Lion or for *bona fide* purposes of decoration I cannot say. Cooper (or his writing assistant) described the bust on the plate as by Bertolini. Byron names the renowned Florentine sculptor correctly as Bartolini (every time, I think), and Mr. Prothero does not set the text right (or rather wrong) by altering *Bartolini* to *Bertolini*; but by evil hap, he quoted (vol. vi, p. 37), as an illustration of the phrase "Bartolini, the celebrated Sculptor," some words from the *Diary of an Invalid*, by Henry Matthews, beginning with "Bertolini is an excellent workman"; and later (p. 222) he has occasion to mention a Professor Bartolini (alive in 1891). Then his volumes fell into the hands of Mr. C. Eastlake Smith, whose invaluable index does not contain the name of *the* Bartolini, Lorenzo, who died in 1850, but does contain the portentous entry "Bertolini, Professor Antonio, sculptor," with a reference to the five several pages upon which the patronymic Bartolini occurs, four for Sculptor Lorenzo and one for Professor Antonio! Mr. Coleridge had better luck when Mr. Smith indexed the seven volumes of poetry; for his note to a remarkable passage in *Don Juan* (vol. vi, p. 360) about

a pale yet radiant face,
Like to a lighted alabaster vase;—

happened to mention the right Bartolini by his Christian name, and was correctly indexed by Mr. Smith.

Of the perpetuation of the wrong patronymic under the flag—the Jolly Roger—of Medwin, another of the

phantom satellites, the above-named Henry Matthews, was doubtless the prime cause; he appeared in the first edition of this present work in 1847 disguised as "Mathews, the invalid" (p. 407 of this edition), though only as recommending the best method of travelling from Pisa to Genoa. In 1824 he had figured in the *Conversations* a trifle more recognizably in a phrase about his brother, the brilliant but ill-starred Charles Skinner Matthews, "a much more able man than the *Invalid*," said Byron. It is therefore safe to assume that, when Medwin furnished Colburn with the wrong name for the inscription on Cooper's plate, he had been misled by Henry Matthews's *Diary of an Invalid*, where the mistake unquestionably occurs.

Another of Medwin's victims is that talented and indefatigable lady Miss Ethel Colburn Mayne, who has written the best book about Byron published for some years, but who might have been better employed in investigating important statements of Medwin's than in hunting up cheap gibes to sling at him. This paragraph from p. 247 of her second volume is not, for style and taste, up to her highest level, and is not even amusing:—

"Tom Medwin—Jeaffreson's 'well-mannered noodle', 'amiable absurdity', 'perplexing simpleton'; Mary Shelley's '*seccatura*', which is the Italian term for a paralysing bore—Tom Medwin, with his notes of Byron's conversations, 'when tipsy' (by Mary's account), had long ago left Pisa. He had returned at the time of Shelley's death, and was present at the cremation on August 16; on the 28th he left again, parting from Byron 'with a sadness that looked like presentiment'."

In this case Medwin has his revenge, for what vengeance is worth to the departed. He tried hard in the *Conversations* to make it appear that he was at the Cremation; but nothing is more certain than that he was

not; and the attempt to mislead was abandoned later on. Miss Mayne will no doubt follow with an excellent grace his humiliating example of withdrawing the statement in her next edition of what is certainly destined to be a standard work on Byron.

Even that magnificent institution the *Dictionary of National Biography*, enduring monument as it is to the memory of its founder the late Mr. George Smith and its first Editor Sir Leslie Stephen, has not escaped the infection. In a notice gratuitously imperfect and wanting in accuracy, it represents Medwin as appearing to have served in the First Life Guards,—on the strength of one of his own title-pages. The author of *The Angler in Wales* describes himself as “late of the First Life Guards.” Of that distinguished regiment, he certainly was—for a fortnight or so; but as to *service*, well, let us see. Mary Shelley, though cordially disliking him, was incapable of lying and was among the least malicious of injured women; and it is to her that the world is beholden for the solution of the mystery which has been made of the “Angler’s” description of himself. Certainly it cannot be said in any correct sense that he “served” in the Life Guards. He was, as we have seen, a lieutenant in the 24th Light Dragoons, put on half-pay with the nominal rank of Captain; and as “Captain Medwin” he was commonly known. Now Mary Shelley, writing “news” to Trelawny in March 1831, says “did you hear that Medwin contrived to get himself gazetted for full pay in the Guards? I fancy that he employed his connection with the Shelleys, who are connected with the King through the FitzClarences. However, a week after he was gazetted as retiring. I suppose the officers cut him at mess; his poor wife and children! how I pity

them!"¹ This important little bit of tittle-tattle was made public as long ago as 1889 by Mrs. Julian Marshall; but it seems to have escaped the writer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, or, perhaps, was deemed of too vague a nature for authoritative use. Probably it had not occurred to Mary, when gossiping to her friend of ten years' standing, to consult the printed notice; had she done so, she would have found that there was a fortnight between the two announcements, which, of course, give but the bald facts. In *The London Gazette* for Tuesday the 1st of February 1831 we read:—

"1st Regiment of Life Guards, Lieutenant Thomas Medwin, from the half-pay of the 24th Light Dragoons, to be Lieutenant, vice George William Fox Lord Kinnaird, who exchanges. Dated 1st February 1831."

And in the *Gazette* for the 15th of February 1831, history goes on thus:—

"1st Regiment of Life Guards, Sub-Lieutenant and Cornet Edward Hammond to be Lieutenant, by purchase, vice Medwin, who retires. Dated 15th February 1831."

Further than this it is hardly worth while to push research; no enquiry could result creditably to Medwin; and one does not want to bespatter him more than necessary. Indeed his morals and repute are as far past

¹ Trelawny appears to have been misinformed when he wrote to Claire in 1822 of the reported marriage of Medwin to "Mrs. Pain" (Letters, 1910, p. 26). The "poor wife" compassionated by Mary, at all events, was undoubtedly the "Baroness" whom he is said to have married in 1825, and left with two daughters when he had spent all her money. She is described in Dallaway's *History of the Western Division of Sussex* as "Anne-Henri-

etta Baroness Hamilton of Sweden; by her first marriage Countess of Stainfort." She died at Siena in 1868. Accounts differ as to details of his domestic misdeeds; but Mrs. Rossetti Angeli, who is rather lenient to him, records *inter alia* (*Shelley and his friends in Italy*, p. 252) that, according to a verbal statement of Trelawny's to her father, Medwin "treated his wife very badly—first dissipated all her money and then abandoned her."

praying for as his claims to be called an accurate narrator.

The *sequelæ* of the disorders affecting his career are not finished or likely ever to be finished. Last, but not least of these, in a legacy of Mr. Andrew Lang's which, to paraphrase and mollify Mr. Waterlow's trenchant summary of Medwin's Life, may be called a fairly good book "well peppered" with inaccuracies, a few lax words of Medwin's serve the Historian of English Literature¹ as sufficient ground for leaving students to infer that Shelley lived habitually on the confines of lunacy. Medwin says (see p. 208 *post*) that the state of the poet's mind "must indeed have been bordering on madness—hanging on the devouring edge of mental darkness. when he could give utterance to those wonderful lines:—

Hasten to the bridal bed!
Underneath the grave 'tis spread!" &c.

He also says that Shelley's "compunction" in respect of Harriett's death "brought on a temporary derangement" (p. 181); but on the next page he tells how the poet went in a business-like way to Bath to obtain if possible his children and provide for their bringing-up. Whether these phrases justify the historian in closing some strangely flippant paragraphs as he does, let posterity decide. "Madness, said Medwin, a man who was much in his company, hung over Shelley like the sword of Damocles." Such are Lang's words²; but they are not the words of Medwin, whose record of the poet leaves no such impression, either intentionally or unintentionally.

At the risk of appearing gratuitously censorious, I have set down what seems to me to be the naked truth about

¹ *History of English Literature from 1912.*
"Beowulf" to Swinburne, Longmans, ² p. 519.

this far from satisfactory biographer of Shelley. It would have been pleasanter to emulate the leniency of a writer of the younger generation — one, indeed, whom, as a baby, I have taken from her mother's arms and held in my own; but Mrs. Rossetti Angeli truly seems to me, in her mature judgment and experience of life, to have set an undue value on Trelawny's testimony, and that of the portrait of Medwin which I had the pleasure of recovering from oblivion and showing, I think, to her alone before putting it in hand for reproduction. Of course I cordially assent to her verdict that, notwithstanding defects and inaccuracies, the revised *Life* is "one of the most valuable Shelley documents that we possess." But the words "staunch to the end in his enthusiasm for Shelley" (p. 253) seem to me a little more generous than the words used in writing to Claire—"he was always honest and consistent in his love of the poet" (Letters, p. 221)—in considering which account I have been unable to dismiss from my mind Trelawny's earlier sayings. Medwin was certainly included in the "blood-sucking" indictment containing the words "he had no honest friends," and, as certainly, was not excepted as one of those who "loved and did not rob" Shelley (*ib.* p. 230). Moreover, writing to Captain Roberts, R.N., from Usk in April 1858, Trelawny mentions (*ib.* p. 215) that Medwin "is loafing about as usual seeking whom he may devour." These phrases qualify seriously the meaning of "honest in his love," which I take really to be that, in Trelawny's opinion, it was not a simulated love: nor was it. The portrait, which struck Mrs. Angeli as "that of an honest and kindly man," I cannot myself get to like: I find it unsympathetic, expressive of a certain obliquity, and wanting in soul; and indeed that conventional phrase expresses to me almost all that was radically the matter with

Medwin. None the less the following summary by Mrs. Angeli (page 223) appeals to me as gentle and to the purpose:—

“Tom Medwin doubtless thought that he fully appreciated his cousin’s poetry, and entertained a very genuine love for it, and hero-worship for the poet; but he had not the intellect to be the one man of his age to fully appreciate Shelley at his true worth. Edward John Trelawny, . . . who had so much of the poet in his own nature, came nearer to a just appreciation; but the one man who had full opportunities to estimate him correctly was Byron.”

Posterity will unquestionably “scrap” all the odds and ends of work by Medwin listed in the fourth Appendix; and that is why I have included the list in the book which posterity cannot “scrap.” The second Heidelberg pamphlet, to which he himself gave the title of *Odds and Ends*, has a certain claim to consideration, which, ungraciously perchance, I desire to recognize. That claim, set up in his seventy-fourth year, is the attempt to render in English several of the Poems of Catullus. His versions have not, on the whole, much fascination (whose versions of Catullus have?); but he seems to have taken pains with them and bestowed some thought on textual questions. The exquisite brotherliness of Carmen CI, “*Multas per gentes*,” he tried to embody in an unsuitable metre enough, the heroic couplet; but he, even he also, came home from his wanderings—not to bury his brother, but to end his days in his brother’s house—the house of Pilfold Medwin in the Carfax at their native Horsham. There, it seems to me—do I do him too much grace?—he visited his mother’s tomb, and carrying his little paper-covered book to her grave, struck out the words *The End* on page 118, and wrote thus in the unfilled page:—

IN MATRIS CENOTAPHIUM.

Per maria et terras multis erroribus actis
 Fessos hoc templum visere tendo pedes
 Ut caram hanc animam postremo munere donem
 Atque iterum mutos alloquar heu cineres.
 Persequor hoc votis longæ post tædia vitæ
 Æternâ tecum posse salute frui.

To "convey" so much of the actual vocabulary of the opening lines of Catullus was not so very furtive: too tempting those wondrous words:—

Multas per gentes et multa per æquora vectus
 Aduenio has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
 Ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
 Et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem;

nor may we blame a man of his convictions for substituting a filial aspiration of orthodox Christianity for the ancestral pagan rites of the divine original.

As regards the mass of the translations it must be admitted that they are greatly inferior in accomplishment to those of his detested enemy Dr. Nott, who employs the heroic quatrain, and the octosyllabic quatrain, in a large number of cases. In rendering *Carmen CI* (XCVI in Nott's edition) the reverend Doctor used the heroic quatrain (Gray's *Elegy* metre), and produced a poor result, departing with atrocious obtuseness from that matchless simplicity with which Catullus preserves from first to last the form of personal address to his brother. Nott positively ends thus—

With many a tear I will the ground bedew—
 Spirit of him I lov'd, those tears receive!
 Spirit of him I valued most, adieu!
 Adieu to him who sleeps in yonder grave!

Medwin has it—

And now meantime, as wont, in ancient rite,
 With these libations I invoke thy sprite,
 And say with grief no floods of tears can tell,
 Farewell! for ever! Brother! O farewell!

If Medwin really did this—and with him one never knows the truth for certain—it is the best thing he ever did in verse. Perhaps after all he had soul enough to feel the emotional quality of the original and how infinitely above him it was; but the triumphant art of it cannot have been fully perceived by a man who in the course of six lines of imitation could not do better than leave unreconciled the *caram hanc animam* of his line 3 and the *tecum* of his line 6. That is nearly as bad as Nott; and yet, somehow, I feel impelled to pardon both the theft and the bungle, and take off my hat to Tom Medwin at parting.

H. B. F.

Midsummer-day, 1913.

46 MARLBOROUGH HILL,
ST. JOHN'S WOOD.



Murkin

P R E F A C E.

[1847.]

TWENTY-FOUR years have elapsed since Shelley was withdrawn from the world, and no "record" of him "remains," save a few fugitive notices scattered about in periodicals. The Notes, it is true, appended to the last edition of his works, are highly valuable, and full of eloquence and feeling, but they relate rather to the "origin and history" of these works, than of the poet, and date only from 1814; leaving his life up to that period a blank, that imperatively requires to be filled up.

Mrs. Shelley, in January, 1839, says, "this is *not the time to tell the truth*, and I should reject any colouring of the truth," and adds, that "the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far only as he is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction, that were they *judged impartially*, his character would stand fairer and brighter than that of any of his contemporaries."

The long interval which has transpired since the writing of this passage, makes me conclude that the amiable and gifted person who penned it, has abandoned, if she had ever formed, the intention of executing this "labour of love;" and the more so, as in 1824, she points out Leigh Hunt as "the person best calculated for such an undertaking."

"The distinguished friendship that Shelley felt for him, and the enthusiastic affection with which he clings to the

memory of his friend," no doubt well qualified him, on those two grounds, for Shelley's biographer; but he doubtless felt that an acquaintance of nine or ten years, most of which were passed by Shelley abroad, furnished him with very inadequate materials.

Sensible how much more fitted he would have been to have performed this office than myself, I should have been happy to have supplied him with data absolutely requisite for tracing Shelley's genius from its first germs up to its maturity, and forming an impartial judgment of his character—data which no one but myself could have supplied, inasmuch as I knew him from childhood—as we were at school together, continually together during the vacations, corresponded regularly, and although I lost sight of him for a few years when in the East, as our intimacy was renewed on my return; and, more than all, as I passed the two last winters and springs of his existence, one under his roof, and the other with him, without the interruption of a single day.

It may be objected that these memorabilia are imperfect, from the almost total want of letters. Unhappily all those—and they would have formed volumes—which I received from him in early youth, were lost, from my not having the habit, at that time, of preserving letters, and that those which passed between us from 1819 to 1822, were lent, and never returned.

Mrs. Shelley has, in one of the volumes containing her lamented husband's Prose Works, given the world the letters she could collect; but, precious as they are in a literary point of view, particularly those to Mr. Peacock, they throw but little light on his life or pursuits. Those letters also are few in number. After the appearance of the *Quarterly Review* article, in 1818, many of his friends

appear to have fallen off—at least discontinued writing to him, and he limits them to “three or four, or even less.”

* But are letters the best *media* for developing character? Judging from Byron's, I should certainly answer in the negative. In his epistolary correspondence, a man always adapts his style and sentiments to the capacity and ways of thinking of those with whom the interchange is carried on; besides that, a person must be intimate indeed with another to lay bare his heart to him, to disclose unreservedly what can only be unfolded in the confidentiality of social intercourse.

It was my determination, on commencing this work, to have differed from all writers of Memoirs, in stating what Shelley's actions and opinions were, and letting the world judge them; but I soon found that such ground was untenable, and was dissatisfied with making myself a mere chronicler; besides that with a knowledge of the motives of his actions, it would have been a gross injustice to have suppressed them. I was strengthened in this resolution by the advice of the author of *Shelley at Oxford*,¹ to whom I am much indebted in these pages, who says, “The biographer who would take upon himself the pleasing and instructing, but difficult and delicate task of composing a faithful history of his whole life, will frequently be com-

* The fact is that men write to please: so far from revealing their own feelings in their private letters, they very generally, according to their power, assume a character which will jump with the humour of their correspondent.—*The Athenæum*.

¹ The quotations from Thomas Jefferson Hogg are not, of course, taken from the incomplete Life of Shelley, but from the series of papers contributed to *The New Monthly Magazine*, five in 1832 under the title of *Percy Bysshe Shelley at Oxford*, and one in May 1833 headed *The History of Percy Bysshe Shelley's*

Expulsion from Oxford. Those who prefer to read them in a handy form, instead of consulting Hogg's two thick volumes of 1858, where they are reprinted, can do so in a very pretty pocket volume called *Shelley at Oxford*, edited by Mr. R. A. Streatfeild (Methuen & Co., 1904).

pelled to discuss the important questions, whether his conduct at certain periods was altogether such as ought to be proposed for imitation ; whether he was ever misled by a glowing temperament, something of hastiness in choice, and a certain constitutional impatience ; whether, like less gifted mortals, he ever shared in the common feature of mortality, repentance,—and to what extent.”

These questions I have fully discussed. How painfully interesting is his Life ! With so many weaknesses—with so much to pardon—so much to pity—so much to admire—so much to love—there is no romance, however stirring, that in abler hands might not have paled before it. Such as it is, I throw it on the indulgence of his friends and the public. It has been written with no indecorous haste—by one sensible of the difficulty of the task—of his inadequacy to do it justice—of his unworthiness to touch the hem of Shelley’s garment, but not by one unable to appreciate the greatness of his genius, or to estimate the qualities of his heart. I was the first to turn the tide of obloquy, to familiarize the world with traits, that by a glimpse, however slight and fleeting, could not but make a favourable impression, and now elaborate a more finished portrait, reflected in the mirror of memory, which distance renders more distinct and faithful, and in the words of Salvator Rosa, may add,—

Dica poi quanto sa rancor severo,
Contra le sue saette ho doppio usbergo,
Non conosco interesse, e son’ sincero.

S O N N E T

ON SHELLEY.

FROM THE GERMAN OF HERWEGH.

WITH agony of thought, intensely striving
 To work out God, his God was doubly dear:
 A faith more firm had never poet here,
 A brighter pledge of bliss immortal giving:
 With all his pulses throbbing for his kind,
 Hope steered his course thro' the world's stormy wave
 If anger moved, but ruffled his calm mind,
 A hatred of the tyrant and the slave.
 In form of man a subtle elfin sprite—
 From Nature's altar pure a hallowed fire—
 A mark for every canting hypocrite—
 Yearning for Heaven with all his soul's desire—
 Cursed by his father—a fond wife's devotion—
 Starlike to sink down into a wild ocean!¹

THE AUTHOR.

¹ In the first edition this sonnet was closed with a sestet, of which the last two lines were:

Cursed by his father—a fond wife's delight—
 Starlike in a wild ocean to expire.

H. B. F.

In order to make an obvious distinction between the author's own foot-notes and the editorial commentary, the former are, throughout the following pages, printed across the whole page and connected with the text by means of asterisks, obelisks, and so on, while the latter are arranged in double column and referred to the text by means of arabic figures, 1, 2, 3, &c.

THE LIFE

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

SUSSEX boasts of two great poets, Collins and Otway—it may pride itself on a third and a greater. Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at Field Place, on the 4th of August, 1792. His surname of Percy being derived from an aunt, who was distantly connected with the Northumberland family, and that of Bysshe from the heiress of Fen Place, through whom that portion of the estate was derived.

The family of Shelly, Shellie, or Shelley, as the name has been spelt at different epochs, is of great antiquity in the above county, and is descended from Sir William, Lord of Affendary, brother of Sir Thomas Shelly, a faithful adherent of King Richard the Second, who was attainted and executed by Henry IV. Without tracing the pedigree, and referring those interested in such matters to the Peerage, under the head of “De Lisle and Dudley,” I will only say, that Sir John Shelley, of Maresfield Park, who dated his Baronetage from the earliest creation of that title, in 1611, had, besides other issue, two sons, Sir William, a judge of the Common-pleas, and Edward; from the latter of whom, in the seventh descent, sprung Timothy, who had also two sons, and settled—having married an American lady—at Christ’s Church, Newark, in North America; where Bysshe was born, on the 21st June, 1731.

As often happens to the junior branches of houses, he

began life with few of the goods of fortune, and little chance of worldly aggrandisement. America was then the land of promise; but it was *only* such to him. He there exercised the profession of a Quack doctor, and married, as it is said, the widow of a miller, but for this I cannot vouch.

To a good name, and a remarkably handsome person, he united the most polished manners and address, and it is little to be wondered at that these, in addition to the *prestige* that never fails to attach itself to a travelled man, should have captivated the great heiress of Horsham, the only daughter and heiress of the Rev. Theobald Michell. The guardian (the young lady was an orphan and a minor) put his *veto* on the match, but, like a new Desdemona, Miss Michell was not to be deterred by interdictions, and eloped with Mr. Shelley to London, where the fugitives were wedded in that convenient asylum for lovers, the Fleet, by the Fleet parson, and lost no time in repairing to Paris. There the lady was attacked, on her arrival, with the small-pox, and her life despaired of; and which circumstance, had it occurred, by a freak of fortune, would have made my mother heiress to the estates.

After his wife's death, an insatiate fortune-hunter, he laid siege to a second heiress in an adjoining county. In order to become acquainted with her, he took up his abode for some time in a small inn on the verge of the Park at Penshurst, a mansion consecrated by the loves of Waller and Saccharissa, (whose oak is still an object of veneration,) and honoured by the praises of Ben Jonson.

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show,
Or touch, of marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;
Thou hast no lantern whereof tales are told

Or stair or courts, but stand'st an ancient pile;
 And these, grudged at, are revered the while.
 Thou joy'st in better marks, of soil, of air,
 Of wood, of water; therein art thou fair.
 Thou hast thy walks for health as well as sport,
 Thy mount, to which the Dryads do resort,
 Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,
 Beneath the broad beech, and the chesnut shade,
 That taller tree, which of a nut was set,
 At his great birth, where all the muses met:
 There in the withered bark are cut the names
 Of many a Sylvan, taken with his flames,
 And thence the ruddy Satyrs oft provoke
 The lighter Fauns to reach the "Lady's Oak;"
 Thy copse, too, named of Gamage, thou hast there,
 That never fails to serve the seasoned deer,
 When thou wouldst feast, or exercise thy friends:
 The lower land, that to the river bends,
 Thy sheep, thy bullocks, kine and calves do feed,
 The middle ground, thy mares and horses breed.
 Each bank doth yield thee conies, and the tops,
 Fertile of wood, Ashore and Sydney copse,
 To crown thy open table doth provide,
 The purple pheasant with the speckled side.

It might well have excited the ambition of Mr. Shelley to become the proprietor of that historical mansion, so often embellished by the Court of Queen Elizabeth, and the presence of Lord Leicester, the nephew of the great Sir Philip Sidney, "a man without spot,"¹ as Shelley calls him in his *Adonais*, the patron and friend of Spenser, who so pathetically laments his death, and where the *Arcadia* (according to family tradition) was partly written; but he was little alive to these influences, and aimed at the hand of Miss Sidney Pery, not as the last scion of the house of Sidney, but as the largest fortune in Kent. He suc-

¹ Sidney, as he fought
 And as he fell and as he lived and loved
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
 Arose . . .

ceeded so well in ingratiating himself with this lady, that she also eloped with him to London, where they were married, at St. James's, Westminster. John Sidney, afterwards Sir John Sidney Shelley, and who has now dropped the name of Shelley, was one of the fruits of this marriage, and in the person of his son, was revived the family title of De Lisle, soon after his marriage with Lady Sophia Fitzclarence, the natural daughter of William the Fourth.

It is worthy of remark, that the patent for his being created Lord Leicester, had been drawn up, but not signed by his late Majesty, and somewhat singular that that title should, in the face of it, have been conferred by the Whigs, for political services, on one who had not only no claim to it, but whose ancestor was the cold-blooded, and times-serving, and foul-mouthed, Lawyer Coke.

As I shall not have occasion further to allude to this branch of the family, I will remark here, that if Percy Bysshe Shelley was proud of anything, it was his connexion with the Sidneys, and that when Sir John, on his eldest son Philip's coming of age, resettled the estate, he offered Percy Bysshe £3000 to renounce his contingency, but which, distressed as he was for money, he refused.

On the 3rd March, 1806, Bysshe, the grandfather, was raised to the baronetage. He owed this distinction, if such it be, to Charles, Duke of Norfolk, who wished thereby to win over to his party the Shelley interest in the western part of the county of Sussex and the Rape of Bramber, not to mention Horsham, on which he, with his borough-mongering propensities, had at this period electioneering designs.

I remember Sir Bysshe well in a very advanced age, a remarkably handsome man, fully six feet in height, and with a noble and aristocratic bearing. *Nil fuit unquam*

sic impar sibi. His manner of life was most eccentric, for he used to frequent daily the tap-room of one of the low inns in Horsham, and there drank with some of the lowest citizens, a habit he had probably acquired in the new world. Though he had built a castle (Goring Castle), that cost him upwards of £80,000, he passed the last twenty or thirty years of his existence in a small cottage, looking on the river Arun, at Horsham, in which all was mean and beggarly—the existence, indeed, of a miser—enriching his legatees at the expense of one of his sons, by buying up his post-obits.

In order to dispose of him, I will add that his *affectionate* son Timothy, received every morning a bulletin of his health, till he became one of the oldest heir-apparents in England, and began to think his father immortal. God takes those to him, who are worth taking, early, and drains to the last sands in the glass, the hours of the worthless and immoral, in order that they may reform their ways. But his were unredeemed by one good action. Two of his daughters by the second marriage led so miserable a life under his roof, that they eloped from him; a consummation he devoutly wished, as he thereby found an excuse for giving them no dowries; and though they were married to two highly respectable men, and one had a numerous family, he made no mention of either of them in his will.

Shelley seems to have had him in his mind when he says * :—

He died—

He was bowed and bent with fears:
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,
Which like fierce fever, left him weak,

* Shelley says in a letter to Leigh Hunt that Lionel in *Rosalind and Helen* was in some degree a painting from Nature, but with respect to time and place ideal.

And his straight lip and bloated cheek
 Were wrapt in spasms by hollow sneers;
 And selfish cares, with barren plough,
 Not age, had lined his narrow brow;
 And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed
 Upon the withered life within,
 Like vipers upon some poisonous weed.¹

Yes, he died at last, and in his room were found bank notes to the amount of £10,000, some in the leaves of the few books he possessed, others in the folds of his sofa, or sewn into the lining of his dressing gown. But "*Ohe! jam satis.*"

Timothy Shelley, his eldest son, and heir to the Shelley and Michell estates, whose early education was much neglected, and who had originally been designed to be sent to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, which the great Sir Philip Sidney founded—and to which his descendant, and Timothy's half-brother, Sir John, nominates the Master, President, or whatever the head of the College may be called, entered himself at University College, Oxford, and after the usual routine of academical studies, by which he little profited, made *The Grand Tour*. He was one of those travellers, who, with so much waste of time, travel for the sake of saying they have travelled; and, after making a circuit of Europe, return home, knowing no more of the countries they have visited than the trunks attached to their carriages. All, indeed, that he did bring back with him was a smattering of French, and a bad picture of an Eruption of Vesuvius, if we except a certain *air*, miscalled that of the old school, which he could put off and on, as occasion served.

¹ This very laxly set out passage from *Rosalind and Helen* is as unlike a portrait of Sir Bysshe of the "noble and aristocratic bearing" as one could well conceive—even

if the text were amended by correctly reading *warped* for *wrapt* and *withering* for *withered*. Lionel is in many ways like a portrait of Shelley himself.

He was a disciple of Chesterfield and La Rochefaucauld, reducing all politeness to forms, and moral virtue to expediency; as an instance of which, he once told his son, Percy Bysshe, in my presence, that he would provide for as many natural children as he chose to get, but that he would never forgive his making a *mésalliance*; a sentiment which excited in Shelley anything but respect for his sire.

This anecdote proves that the moral sense in Sir Timothy was obtuse; indeed, his religious opinions were also very lax; although he occasionally went to the parish church, and made his servants regularly attend divine service, he possessed no true devotion himself, and inculcated none to his son and heir, so that much of Percy Bysshe's scepticism may be traced to early example, if not to precept. On one occasion when Sir Timothy and his son were walking in a street of Horsham they met the chaplain of the gaol in his canonicals just returned from administering the last consolations of religion to a criminal, before his execution. "Well," exclaimed the baronet with a loud laugh, "old soul-saver! how did you turn the rascal off?" How sadly forgetful was a father here of the *reverentia pueris*. But I anticipate. Before Sir Timothy, then Mr. Shelley, set out on his European tour, he had engaged himself to Miss Pilfold (daughter of Charles Pilfold, Esq., of Effingham Place), who had been brought up by her aunt, Lady Ferdinand Pool, the wife of the well-known father of the turf, and owner of "Potoooooooo," and the equally celebrated "Waxy" and "Mealy."

It may not be irrelevant to mention that Miss Michell, Sir Bysshe's first wife, was my grandfather's first cousin; and that my mother bore the same degree of consanguinity to Miss Pilfold; their fathers being brothers; which

circumstances I mention in order to account for the intimacy of our families, and mine with Bysshe, as he was always called. Among the letters of an aunt of mine, was found one * from him, written in his eleventh year, and which I give entire, not so much on account of its merit, or as a literary curiosity, but to show the early regard he entertained for me, the playfulness of his character as a boy, and the dry humour of franking the letter, his father then being member of Parliament for the Rape of Bramber; nor is it less valuable to show his early fondness for a boat.

He was most engaging and amiable as a child; such as he, afterwards thinking perhaps of himself, describes:—

He was a gentle boy,
And in all gentle sports took joy;
Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,
With a small feather for a sail,
His fancy on that spring would float,
If some invisible breeze might stir
Its marble calm.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was brought up in retirement at Field Place, and received the same education as his elder sisters,¹ being instructed in the rudiments of Latin and Greek by Mr. Edwards, the clergyman of Warnham, (the parish in which they lived,) a good old man, but of very limited intellects, and whose preaching might have been edifying if his Welsh pronunciation had made it intelligible; at all events, his performance of the service was little calculated to inspire devotion. At ten years of age Percy Bysshe was sent to Sion House, Brentford, where

* See Appendix, No. 1.

¹ Shelley had no elder sisters. He had five sisters, of whom one died in infancy, and one brother,

the youngest of the family, from whom the present Baronet descends.

I had preceded him. This school, though not a "Dotheboys-hall," was conducted with the greatest regard to economy. A slice of bread with an "*idée*" of butter smeared on the surface, and "thrice skimmed skyblue," to use an expression of Bloomfield the poet, was miscalled a breakfast. The supper, a repetition of the same frugal repast; and the dinner, at which it was never allowed to send up the plate twice without its eliciting an observation from the distributor, that effectually prevented a repetition of the offence, was made up generally of ingredients that were *anonymous*. The Saturday's meal, a sort of pie, a collect from the plates during the week. This fare, to a boy accustomed to the delicacies of the table, was not the most attractive; the whole establishment was in keeping with the dietary part of it, and the system of the *lavations* truly Scotch.

The lady of the house was by no means a Mrs. Squeers—I do not remember seeing her five times whilst I was at the seminary of learning,—she was too *fine* to have anything to do with all the dirty details of the household; she was, or was said to be, connected with the Duke of Argyll—I never knew one of the Scottish nation who did not claim relationship, or clanship, with the noble duke. She was given out for a sprig of nobility at any rate; another sister, an old maid, the factotum of the establishment, was an economist of the first order.

Exchanging for the caresses of his sisters an association with boys, mostly the sons of London shopkeepers, of rude habits and coarse manners, who made game of his girlishness, and despised him because he was not "one of them;" not disposed to enter into their sports, to wrangle, or fight; confined between four stone walls, in a playground of very limited dimensions—a few hundred yards—(with

a single Elm tree in it, and that the Bell tree, so called from its having suspended in its branches, the odious bell whose din, when I think of it, yet jars my ears,) instead of breathing the pure air of his native fields, and rambling about the plantations and flower gardens of his father's country seat—the sufferings he underwent at his first outset in this little world were most acute.

Sion House was indeed a perfect hell to him. Fagging, that vestige of barbarous times, in the positive sense of the word, as adopted in public schools, was not in strict use; that is, the boys of the higher classes had not expressly chosen and particular *slaves*; but perhaps there was in operation here, another and a worse form of government—a democracy of tyrants—instead of the rule of a few petty sovereigns; and although here the elder boys did not oblige their juniors to perform for them offices the most menial, to clean their coats and shoes, they forced them to bowl to them at cricket, and run after their balls until they were ready to drop with fatigue—to go out of bounds for them to the circulating library, or purchase with dictionaries and other books sold by weight to the grocer, bread and cheese to stay their cravings of hunger, and to receive the punishment of the transgression, if caught in the fact. And more than one of these petty despots (there were young men at the school of seventeen or eighteen) used to vent on his victims his ill-humours in harsh words, sometimes in blows. Poor Shelley! he was always the martyr, and it was under the smart of this oppression that he wrote:—

There arose
From the near school-room, voices, that alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes,
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

And again :—

Day after day—week after week—

I walked about like a thing [*sic for corpse*] alive—

Alas! dear [*sic for sweet*] friend! you must believe

The [*sic for this*] heart is stone—it did not break.

We were about sixty school-fellows. I well remember the day when he was added to the number. A new arrival is always a great excitement to the other boys, who pounce upon a *fresh man* with the boldness of birds of prey. We all had had to pass through this ordeal, and the remembrance of it gave my companions a zest for torture. All tormented him with questionings. There was no end to their mockery, when they found that he was ignorant of pegtop or marbles, or leap-frog, or hopscotch, much more of fives or cricket. One wanted him to spar, another to run a race with him. He was a tyro in both these accomplishments, and the only welcome of the Neophyte was a general shout of derision. To all these impertinences he made no reply, but with a look of disdain written in his countenance, turned his back on his new associates, and when he was alone, found relief in tears.

Shelley was at this time tall for his age, slightly and delicately built, and rather narrow chested, with a complexion fair and ruddy, a face rather long than oval. His features, not regularly handsome, were set off by a profusion of silky brown hair, that curled naturally. The expression of countenance was one of exceeding sweetness and innocence. His blue eyes were very large and prominent, considered by phrenologists to indicate a great aptitude for verbal memory. They were at times, when he was abstracted, as he often was in contemplation, dull, and, as it were, insensible to external objects; at

others they flashed with the fire of intelligence. His voice was soft and low, but broken in its tones,—when anything much interested him, harsh and immodulated; and this peculiarity he never lost. As is recorded of Thomson, he was naturally calm, but when he heard of or read of some flagrant act of injustice, oppression, or cruelty, then indeed the sharpest marks of horror and indignation were visible in his countenance.

I have said that he was delicately framed, and it has been remarked, “that it is often noticed in those of very fine and susceptible genius. That mysterious influence, which the mind exercises over the body, seeming to prevent the growth of physical strength, when the intellect is kept ever alive, and the spirits continually are agitated.”

“As his port had the meekness of a maiden, the heart of the young virgin who had never crossed her father’s threshold to encounter the rude world, could not be more susceptible of all the sweet charities than his. In this respect Shelley’s disposition would happily illustrate the innocence and virginity of the Muses. He possessed a most affectionate regard for his relations, and particularly for the females of his family. It was not without manifest joy that he received a letter from his mother and sisters,”—for the two eldest he had an especial fondness, and I will here observe that one, unhappily removed from the world before her time, possessed a talent for oil-painting that few artists have acquired, and that the other bore a striking resemblance in her beauty and amiability, to his cousin, Harriet Grove, of whom I shall have to speak. Mr. Hogg mentions, on the occasion of Shelley’s seeing the attachment and tenderness of two sisters at Oxford, his feelings regarding the sisterly affections, and says he seems to have had his own in his eye. He on his occasion

described their appearance, and drew a lovely picture of this amiable and innocent attachment ; the dutiful regard of the younger, which partook, in some degree, of filial reverence ; but, as more facile and familiar, and of the protecting, instinctively hoping fondness of the elder, that resembled maternal tenderness, but with less of reserve and more of sympathy.

As a proof of his great sweetness of disposition and feeling for others, I will cite an example of which I was an eye-witness. Two of his sisters, on the occasion of a visit with himself to a young lady of their own age, and a near relation, who was shy, reserved, and awkward, behaved to her as he considered rudely, at which Shelley was much hurt, endeavoured to soothe her, and severely reprimanded his sisters, and persuaded his father, on his return home, to call and make apology for them.

Such was Shelley when noviciated at Sion House Academy. Our master, a Scotch doctor of law, and a divine, was a choleric man, of a sanguinary complexion, in a green old age ; not wanting in good qualities, but very capricious in his temper, which, good or bad, was influenced by the daily occurrences of a domestic life, not the most harmonious, and of which his face was the barometer, and his hand the index. He was a tolerable Greek and Latin scholar : Homer, his *cheval de bataille*. He could construe fluently, in his own way, some plays of Æschylus—Schutz being his oracle—and several of those of Sophocles and Euripides, looking upon the text as immaculate, never sticking fast at any of its corruptions, but driving straight forwards, in defiance of obstacles. The brick wall of no chorus ever made him pull up. In reading the historians, he troubled himself as little with digressions or explanations of the habits and customs of

the ancients, or maps. His Latin verses were certainly *original*, but neither Virgilian nor Ovidian, for I remember an inscription of his on a Scotch mull, which had been presented to him (he took an inordinate quantity of Scotch snuff) by one of his pupils, it ran thus:—Snuff-box loquitur:—

Me, Carolus Mackintosh, de dono, dedit, alumnus,
Præceptor, præsensu, accipit atque tenet.

Shelley certainly imbibed no love of the classics, much as he afterwards cultivated them, from this *Dominie*. The dead languages were to him as bitter a pill as they had been to Byron, but he acquired them, as it were intuitively, and seemingly without study, for during school-hours he was wont to gaze at the passing clouds,—all that could be seen from the lofty windows which his desk fronted—or watch the swallows as they flitted past, with longing for their wings; or would scrawl in his school-books—a habit he always continued—rude drawings of pines and cedars, in memory of those on the lawn of his native home. On these occasions, our master would sometimes peep over his shoulder, and greet his ears with no pleasing salutation.

Our pedagogue, when he was in one of his good humours, dealt also in what he called *facetie*, and when we came to the imprisonment of the winds in the Cave of Æolus, as described in the *Æneid*, used, to the merriment of the school, who enjoyed the joke much, to indulge in Cotton's parody on the passage, prefacing it with an observation, that his father never forgave him for the Travestie—a punishment richly merited, and which ought to have been visited on the joker by his other pupils as it was by Shelley, who afterwards expressed to me his disgust at this bad taste, for he never could endure obscenity in any form.

A scene, that to poor Shelley, who instead of laughing

had made a face at the silly attempt at wit, and which his preceptor had probably observed, has often recurred to me. A few days after this, he had a theme set him for two Latin lines on the subject of *Tempestas*. He came to me to assist him in the task. I had got a cribbing book, and of which I made great use—Ovid's *Tristibus*. I knew that the only work of Ovid with which the doctor was acquainted was the *Metamorphoses*, the only one, indeed, read in that and other seminaries of learning, and by what I thought great good luck, happened to stumble on two lines exactly applicable to the purpose. The hexameter I forget, but the pentameter ran thus:—

Jam jam tacturos sidera celsa putes.

When Shelley's turn came to carry up his exercise, my eyes were turned on the *Dominie*. There was a *peculiar* expression in his features, which, like the lightning before the storm, portended what was coming. The spectacles, generally lifted above his dark and bushy brows, were lowered to their proper position, and their lenses had no sooner caught the said hexameter and pentameter than he read with a loud voice the stolen line, laying a sarcastic emphasis on every word, and suiting the action to the word by boxes on each side of Shelley's ears. Then came the comment, “‘*Jam jam*,’—Pooh, pooh, boy! raspberry jam! Do you think you are at your mother's?” Here a burst of laughter echoed through the listening benches. “Don't you know that I have a sovereign objection to those two monosyllables, with which schoolboys cram their verses? haven't I told you so a hundred times already? ‘*Tacturos sidera celsa putes*,’—what, do the waves on the coast of Sussex strike the stars, eh?—‘*celsa sidera*,’—who does not know that the stars are high?

Where did you find that epithet?—in your *Gradus ad Parnassum*, I suppose. You will never mount so high;” (another box on the ears, which nearly felled him to the ground)—“*putes!* you may think this very fine, but to me it is all balderdash, hyperbolical stuff;” (another cuff) after which he tore up the verses, and said in a fury, “There, go now, sir, and see if you can’t write something better.”¹

Poor Shelley! I had been the cause of his misfortune—of what affected him more than this unjust punishment—the ridicule of the whole school; and I was half inclined to have opened my desk, and produced, to the shame of the ignorant pedagogue, the original line of the great Latin poet, which this Crispinus had so savagely abused, but terror, a persuasion that his penance would be light compared to mine, soon repressed the impulse.

Youthful feelings are not deep, but the impression of this scene long left a sting behind it; perhaps Shelley, in brooding over the prediction as to his incapacity for writing Latin verses, then resolved to falsify it, for he afterwards, as will appear by two specimens which I give in their proper place, became a great proficient in the art.

He passed among his schoolfellows as a strange and

¹ Medwin’s industrious excursions into the tongues being voluminous and pretentious rather than exact or important, it will not be worth while to set his learning to rights *passim*; but the reader should now and again, if possible, see Peacock, whose “fine wit makes such a wound the knife is lost in it”; and on this jumble the witty scholar, commenting in *Fraser’s Magazine* for June 1858, is too good to miss: cutting in at *putes*, he says: “So far the story is not very classically told. The title of the book should have been given as *Tristia*, or *De*

Tristibus; and the reading is *tacturas*, not *tacturos*; *summa*, not *celsa*; the latter term is inapplicable to the stars. The distich is this:

Me miserum! quanti montes
volvuntur aquarum!

Jam, jam tacturas sidera sum-
ma putes.

... Shelley was grievously beaten for what the schoolmaster thought bad Latin . . . for the true Ovidian Latin, which the Doctor held to be bad.” The name of the Doctor, not mentioned by Medwin, was Greenlaw.

unsocial being, for when a holiday relieved us from our tasks, and the other boys were engaged in such sports as the narrow limits of our prison-court allowed, Shelley, who entered into none of them, would pace backwards and forwards—I think I see him now—along the southern wall, indulging in various vague and undefined ideas, the chaotic elements, if I may say so, of what afterwards produced so beautiful a world. I very early learned to penetrate into this soul sublime—why may I not say divine, for what is there that comes nearer to God than genius in the heart of a child? I, too, was the only one at the school with whom he could communicate his sufferings, or exchange ideas: I was, indeed, some years his senior, and he was grateful to me for so often singling him out for a companion; for it is well known that it is considered in some degree a *condescension* for boys to make intimates of those in a lower form than themselves. Then we used to walk together up and down his favourite spot, and there he would outpour his sorrows to me, with observations far beyond his years, and which, according to his after ideas, seemed to have sprung from an antenatal life. I have often thought that he had these walks of ours in mind, when, in describing an antique group, he says, “Look, the figures are walking with a sauntering and idle pace, and talking to each other as they walk, as you may have seen a younger and an elder boy at school, walking in some grassy spot of the play-ground, with that tender friendship for each other which the age inspires.” If Shelley abominated one task more than another it was a dancing lesson. At a Ball at Willis’s rooms, where, among other pupils of Sala, I made one, an aunt of mine, to whom the Letter No. 1, in the Appendix, was addressed, asked the dancing master why Bysshe was

not present, to which he replied in his broken English, "Mon Dieu, madam, what should he do here? Master Shelley will not learn any ting—he is so *gauche*." In fact, he contrived to abscond as often as possible from the dancing lessons, and when forced to attend, suffered inexpressibly.

Half-year after half-year passed away, and in spite of his seeming neglect of his tasks, he soon surpassed all his competitors, for his memory was so tenacious that he never forgot a word once turned up in his dictionary. He was very fond of reading, and greedily devoured all the books which were brought to school after the holidays; these were mostly *blue* books. Who does not know what blue books mean? but if there should be any one ignorant enough not to know what those dear darling volumes, so designated from their covers, contain, be it known, that they are or were to be bought for sixpence, and embodied stories of haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages—a most exciting and interesting sort of food for boys' minds; among those of a larger calibre was one which I have never seen since, but which I still remember with a *recouché* delight. It was *Peter Wilkins*. How much Shelley wished for a winged wife and little winged cherubs of children!¹

¹ In the summer of 1803 Shelley completed his eleventh year and Medwin his sixteenth. It may be doubted whether a lad of eleven with such a father as Shelley's, and such a companion as his cousin Tom Medwin to train him in undesirable knowledge, would have got much harm from that fine romance of the Flying People, *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, a Cornish Man* (1751). Indeed if he really read it and understood thoroughly the domestic story of the castaway Cornubian and the

exquisitely conceived and drawn Youwarkee, the author, Robert Paltock, must not be begrudged a place among the *literati* who contributed towards the shaping of such a denizen of the upper sky as Shelley ultimately became. One almost hopes Medwin was able to impress his little cousin with the true value of the flying woman's triumph when she bore a son whose anatomy and physiology, smacking of both parents, was not the true expression of either line of his ancestry.

But this stock was very soon exhausted. As there was no school library, we soon resorted, "under the rose," to a low circulating one in the town (Brentford), and here the treasures at first seemed inexhaustible. Novels at this time, (I speak of 1803) in three goodly volumes, such as we owe to the great Wizard of the North, were unknown. Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, formed the staple of the collection. But these authors were little to Shelley's taste, for they exhibited life pretty much as it is, and poets of all ages have despised the real. Anne Radclyffe's works pleased him most, particularly *The Italian*, but the Rosa-Matilda school, especially a strange, wild romance, entitled *Zofloya, or the Moor*, a Monk-Lewis production, where his Satanic Majesty, as in *Faust*, plays the chief part, enraptured him. The two novels he afterwards wrote, entitled *Zastrozzi* and *The Rosicrucian*, were modelled after this ghastly production, all of which I now remember, is, that the principal character is an incarnation of the devil, but who, unlike *The Monk*, (then a prohibited book, but afterwards an especial favourite with Shelley) instead of tempting a man and turning him into a likeness of himself, enters into a woman called Olympia, who poisons her husband homœopathically, and ends by being carried off very melodramatically in blue flames to the place of dolor.¹

¹ Algernon Charles Swinburne, the only man I ever knew as having read *Zofloya, or the Moor*, told me, in 1886, that the book was in three octavo volumes, *malgré* the contrary inference to be drawn from Medwin's paragraph, and that the eponymous hero is in fact revealed on the last page as "the Father of Evil in person," and bears off the female accomplice of his crimes to a gulf of everlasting fire, "opening

somewhere in the Alps (if I mistake not)," said Swinburne. The whole action of the book is, according to this almost infallible witness, concerned with the misfortunes of Virtue in the person of "the innocent Lilla," who is generally undergoing incarceration and varieties of torment throughout her blameless but comfortless career, and the prosperities of Vice in the person of "the fiendish Victoria," who

"Accursed," said Schiller, "the folly of our nurses, who distort the imagination with frightful ghost stories, and impress ghastly pictures of executions on our weak brains, so that involuntary shudderings seize the limbs of a man, making them rattle in frosty agony," &c. "But who knows," he adds, "if these traces of early education be ineffaceable in us?" Schiller was, however, himself much addicted to this sort of reading. It is said of Collins that he employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction and subjects of fancy, and by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was universally delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular tradition. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens. Milton, too, in early life, lived in a similar dream-land, was fond of high romance and gothic dialleries; and it would seem that such contemplations furnish a fit *pabulum* for the development of poetical genius.

This constant dwelling on the marvellous, had considerable influence on Shelley's imagination, nor is it to be wondered, that at that age he entertained a belief in apparitions, and the power of evoking them, to which he alludes frequently in his afterworks, as in *Alastor* :

By forcing some lone ghost,
My [*sic*] messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are;

ultimately accomplishes "the vivisection of Virtue by hewing her amiable victim into more or less minute though palpitating fragments," after which the aforementioned retribution overtakes her in the grasp of her infernal paramour,

Zofloya, *alias* Satan. Swinburne saw no reason to question that, in style throughout, and occasionally in incident, *Zofloya* was the immediate model of *Zastrozzi*. The authoress was Charlotte Dacre (Mrs. Byrne), better known as "Rosa Matilda."

and in an earlier effusion :

Oh, there are genii [*sic* for *spirits*] of the air,
And genii of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees ;

and again in the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* :

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead,
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed—
I was not heard—I saw them not.

After supping on the horrors of the Minerva press, he was subject to strange, and sometimes frightful dreams, and was haunted by apparitions that bore all the semblance of reality. We did not sleep in the same dormitory, but I shall never forget one moonlight night seeing Shelley walk into my room. He was in a state of somnambulism. His eyes were open, and he advanced with slow steps to the window, which, it being the height of summer, was open. I got out of bed, seized him with my arm, and waked him—I was not then aware of the danger of suddenly rousing the sleep-walker. He was excessively agitated, and after leading him back with some difficulty to his couch, I sat by him for some time, a witness to the severe erethism of his nerves, which the sudden shock produced.

This was the only occasion, however, to my knowledge, that a similar event occurred at school, but I remember that he was severely punished for this involuntary transgression. If, however, he ceased at that time to somnambulize, he was given to waking dreams, a sort of lethargy and abstraction that became habitual to him, and after the *accès* was over, his eyes flashed, his lips quivered, his

voice was tremulous with emotion, a sort of ecstasy came over him, and he talked more like a spirit or an angel than a human being.

The second or third year after Shelley's domicile at Sion House, Walker¹ gave a course of lectures in the great room at the academy, and displayed his Orrery. This exhibition opened to Shelley a new universe of speculations; he was, till then, quite ignorant of astronomy; looking upon the stars as so many lights in heaven, as flowers on the earth, sent for our mere gratification and enjoyment; but if he was astonished at the calculations of the mathematician, and the unfolding of our System, he was still more delighted at the idea of a plurality of worlds. Saturn, which was then visible, and which we afterwards looked at through a telescope, particularly interested him, its atmosphere seeming to him an irrefragable proof of its being inhabited like our globe. He dilated on some planets being more favoured than ourselves, and was enchanted with the idea that we should, as spirits, make the grand tour through the heavens,—perhaps, to use the words of Jean Paul Richter, “that as boys are advanced and promoted from one class to another, we should rise to a progressive state from planet to planet, till we became Gods.” But if his mind was thus opened, he was not less charmed at the chemical experiments, particularly with the fact that earth, air, and water are not simple elements. This course of lectures ended with the solar microscope, which, whilst it excited *his* curiosity, constituted to most of us little spectators the most attractive part of the exhibition. The mites in cheese, where the whole active population was in motion—the wing of a fly—the vermicular *animalculæ* in vine-

¹ See Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, i. 17, 29.

gar, and other minute creations still smaller, and even invisible to the naked eye, formed afterwards the subjects of many of our conversations; and that he had not forgotten the subject is proved by his making a solar microscope his constant companion, and an anecdote is told in reference to it, which places in a strong light his active benevolence:—"We were crossing the New Road," says Mr. Hogg, "when he said sharply, 'I must call for a moment, but it will not be out of the way at all,' and then dragged me suddenly towards the left. I enquired whither are we bound, and I believe I suggested the postponement of the intended visit till to-morrow. He answered that it was not at all out of our way. I was hurried along rapidly towards the left; we soon fell into an animated discussion respecting the nature of the virtue of the Romans, which in some measure beguiled the weary way. Whilst he was talking with much vehemence, and a total disregard of the people who thronged the streets, he suddenly wheeled about, and pushed me through a narrow door; to my infinite surprise I found myself in a pawnbroker's shop. It was in the neighbourhood of Newgate street, for he had no idea whatever, in practice, either of time or space, nor did he in any degree regard method in the conduct of business. There were several women in the shop in brown and grey cloaks, with squalling children, some of them were attempting to persuade the children to be quiet, or, at least, to scream with moderation; others were enlarging and pointing out the beauties of certain coarse and dirty sheets that lay before them, to a man on the other side of the counter. I bore this substitute for our proposed tea for some minutes with great patience, but, as the call did not promise to terminate speedily, I said to Shelley in a whisper, 'Is not

this almost as bad as the Roman virtue?' Upon this he approached the pawnbroker: it was long before he obtained a hearing, and he did not find civility; the man was unwilling to part with a valuable pledge so soon, or perhaps he hoped to retain it eventually, or it might be the obliquity of his nature disqualified him for respectful behaviour. A pawnbroker is frequently an important witness in criminal proceedings; it has happened to me, therefore, to see many specimens of this kind of banker; they sometimes appeared not less respectable than other tradesmen—and sometimes I have been forcibly reminded of the first I ever met with by an equally ill-conditioned fellow. I was so little pleased with the introduction, that I stood aloof in the shop, and did not hear what passed between him and Shelley. On our way to Covent Garden, I expressed my surprise and dissatisfaction at our strange visit, and I learned that when he came to London before, in the course of the summer, some old man had related to him a tale of distress—of a calamity which could only be alleviated by the timely application of ten pounds; five of them he drew from his pocket, and to raise the other five he had pawned his beautiful solar microscope! He related this act of beneficence simply and briefly as if it were a matter of course, and such indeed it was to him. I was ashamed of my impatience, and we strode along in silence.

“It was past ten when we reached the hotel, some excellent tea and a liberal supply of hot muffins in the coffee-room, now quiet and solitary, were the more grateful after the wearisome delay and vast deviation. Shelley often turned his head, and cast eager glances towards the door; and whenever the waiter replenished our teapot, or approached our box, he was interrogated whether any

one had called. At last the desired summons was brought ; Shelley drew forth some bank notes, hurried to the bar, and returned as hastily, bearing in triumph under his arm a mahogany box, followed by the officious waiter, with whose assistance he placed it upon the bench by his side. He viewed it often with evident satisfaction, and sometimes patted it affectionately in the course of calm conversation. The solar microscope was always a favourite plaything, or instrument of scientific inquiry ; whenever he entered a house his first care was to choose some window of a southern aspect, and if permission could be obtained by prayer or purchase, straightway cut a hole through the shutter to receive it. His regard for the solar microscope was as lasting as it was strong ; for he retained it several years after this adventure, and long after he had parted with all the rest of his philosophical apparatus."

But to return to Sion House, and perhaps I have dwelt long enough on the first epoch of the life of the Poet. I was removed to a public school, with only one regret—to part from him ; and Shelley shortly afterwards was sent to Eton. So much did we mutually hate Sion House, that we never alluded to it in after life ; nor shall I have much to say about Eton. The *pure* system of fagging was here, as it still is, carried on in all its rankness ; and, as it is the maxim of jurisprudence, that custom makes law—that tradition stands in the place of, and has the force of law—has continued to defy all attempts to put it down. By the way, in one of the military colleges, hardly a year ago, a young man was rolled up in a snow-ball, and left in his room during the time the other cadets were at church. The consequence was, that though restored to animation, he still is, and is likely to remain all his life, a cripple.

The authorities, to whom an appeal was made against this barbarous treatment, refused to interfere. Shelley, Mrs. Shelley says,¹ "refusing to fag at Eton, was treated with revolting cruelty by masters and boys. This roused, instead of taming his spirit, and he rejected the duty of obedience, when it was enforced by menaces and punishment. To aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, such as he found them, collected together in societies, where one egged on the other to acts of tyranny, was joined the deepest sympathy and compassion; while the attachment he felt to individuals, and the admiration with which he regarded their prowess and virtue, led him to entertain a high opinion of the perfectibility of human nature; and he believed that all could reach the highest grade of moral improvement, did not the customs and prejudices of society foster evil passions and excuse evil actions."

That the masters would not listen to his complaints, if he made any, I readily believe; and the senior boys no doubt resented, as contumacy, and infringement of their rights, Shelley's solitary resistance to them, and visited him with condign punishment. It has been said, and the anecdote is probably borrowed from the *Life of Shaftesbury*, that he headed a conspiracy against this odious and degrading custom, but I have enquired of some Etonians, his contemporaries, and find that there is no foundation for the report. Indeed, what could a conspiracy of the junior boys, however extensive, effect by numbers against a body so much their superiors in age and physical force?

Tyranny produces tyranny, in common minds; and it is well known in schools, that those boys who have been

¹ Medwin acknowledged the source of these remarks in the first edition of the *Life*; but the words "Mrs. Shelley says" are struck out

in MS. in the revised copy—perhaps erroneously. The passage is from Mary's note on *Queen Mab*.

the most fagged, become the greatest oppressors; not so Shelley: he says [Dedication to *Laon and Cythna*]:—

And then I clasped my hands, and looked around,
But none was near to mark my streaming eyes,
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground;
So without shame I spake—"I will be wise
And just and free—and mild—if in me lies
Such power: for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize,
Without reproach or check."

The boy, so delicately organized, with so nervous a temperament, under the influence of a chronic melancholy, whose genius was a sort of malady; this child, so strong and yet so feeble, suffered in every way. Like the martyrs, who smiled in the midst of torture, he sought refuge in his own thoughts, in the heaven of his own soul, and perhaps this inward life aided him in his search after those mysteries to which he afterwards clung with a faith so unshaken.

It is well known how few boys profit much by these great public schools, especially by Eton, the most aristocratic of them all. He says [*Ibidem*]:—

Nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn.

But an exception to these was one of the masters Dr. Lind, whom he had in mind, in the old man who liberates Laon from his tower in *The Revolt of Islam*, (and it might be added in the Hermit in *Prince Athanase*,) who befriended and supported him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration, and with whom Shelley says he read the Symposium.

Then Plato's words of light in thee and me
Lingered, like moonlight in the moonless East,
For we had just then read—thy memory
Is faithful now—the story of *the Feast*.

But though he did not distinguish himself highly at Eton, owing perhaps to his want of emulation, and ambition of shining above his fellows in the class; he passed through the school with credit. He had been so well grounded in the classics, that it required little labour for him to get up his daily lessons. With these, indeed, he often went before his master unprepared, his out-of-school hours being occupied with other studies.

Stories are told of his chemical mishaps.—I have before me two notes from his father to mine, written in 1808. Shelley had sent for some book on chemistry, which happened to be in my father's library, but which fell into the hands of his tutor and was sent back. Sir Timothy Shelley says—“*I have returned the book on chemistry, as it is a forbidden thing at Eton!*” Might not this extraordinary prohibition have the more stimulated Shelley to engage in the pursuit?

He made himself a tolerable French scholar, and during the last year worked hard at German, that most difficult of modern, I might say of all tongues, and in which, with his astonishing verbal memory, he soon made great advances.

The author of the papers entitled “P. B. Shelley at Oxford” says that, on visiting him, “he was writing the usual exercise, which is presented once a week—a Latin translation of a paper in the *Spectator*; he soon finished it, and as he held it before the fire to dry, I offered to take it from him; he said it was not worth looking at, but I persisted, through a certain scholastic curiosity, to examine the Latinity of my new acquaintance. He gave it me. The Latin was sufficiently correct, but the version was paraphrastic; which I observed; he assented, and said it would pass muster, and he felt no interest in such

efforts, and no desire to excel in them. I also noticed many portions of heroic verse, and several entire verses, and these I pointed out as defects in a prose composition. He smiled archly, and added in his peculiar whisper: 'Do you think they will observe them? I inserted them intentionally, to try their ears. I once showed up a theme at Eton, to old Keate, in which there were a great many verses, but he observed them, scanned them, and asked why I had introduced them—I answered that I did not know they were there—this was partly true and partly false, and he believed me, and immediately applied to me a line in which Ovid says of himself:

Et quid tentabam dicere, versus erat.'

Shelley then spoke of the facility with which he composed Latin verses, and taking the paper out of my hand, he began to put the entire translation into verse. He would sometimes open at hazard a prose writer, as Livy or Sallust, and by changing the position of the words, and occasionally substituting others, he would transmute several sentences from prose to verse, to heroic, or more commonly elegiac verse, for he was particularly charmed with the graceful and easy flow of the latter, with surprising rapidity and readiness."

That he had certainly arrived at great skill in the art of versification, I think I shall be able to prove by the following specimens I kept among my treasures, which he gave me in 1808 or 9. The first is the Epitaph in Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, probably a school task.¹

¹ In Medwin's tiny collection of *Nugæ* (Heidelberg, 1856) the first piece is a rendering of the whole Elegy into Latin, all in elegiacs but the epitaph, which is this very

Epitaphium! It is right to record that, of this very scarce little book, I have one copy presented by the "author" to Captain W. W. Shortt and having the word EDITED in-

EPITAPHIUM.

Hic, sinu fessum caput, hospitale,
 Cespitis, dormit juvenis, nec illi
 Fata ridebant, popularis ille
 Nescius auræ.

Musa non vultu, genus, arrogante,
 Rusticâ natum grege despicatur,
 Et suum, moerens puerum, notavit
 Sollicitudo.

Indoles illi bene larga, pectus
 Veritas sedem sibi vindicavit,
 Et pari, tantis meritis, beavit
 Munere, cœlum.

Omne, quod mæstis habuit, miserto
 Corde, largivit lacrymam, recepit,
 Omne, quod cœlo voluit, fidelis
 Pectus amici.

Longius, sed tu, fuge, curiosus,
 Cæteras laudes, fuge, suspicari,
 Cæteras culpas, fuge, velle tractas
 Sede tremendâ.

Spe tremescentes, recubant, in illâ
 Sede, virtutes, simulatque culpis,
 In sui Patris gremio, (tremendâ
 Sede,) Deique.

serted in manuscript roman capitals between *Nugæ* and *By Thomas Medwin*. In this correction I trace Medwin's hand, not Shortt's. The *Epitaphium* seems to have been very much edited in 1856; for in the *Nugæ* we read, for example, at the close, what is practically an altogether new version, namely—

Cæteris donis, fuge, suspicari,
 Debitas laudes meritis negare.
 Cæteras culpas, fuge, velle tractas
 Sede verendâ.

Spes, metus, sacrâ, recubant in
 illâ
 Sede, virtutes, pariterque culpæ,
 In patris cari gremio, Deique,
 Pace beatâ.

But, as Medwin takes at least as much editorial liberty when he extracts from published writings of Shelley, Mrs. Shelley, Hogg, or whomsoever, we need not in the present instance hasten to reject the *Epitaphium* from the roll of Shelley's *juvenilia*.

The second specimen of his versification is of a totally different character, and shows a considerable precocity.

IN HOROLOGIUM.

Inter marmoreas, Leonoræ, pendula colles,
 Fortunata nimis, Machina, dicit horas.
 Quà *manibus*, premit illa duas, insensa, papillas,
 Cur mihi sit *digito* tangere, amata, nefas.¹

Though these two poems may not bear strict criticism, and fall short of those produced by Canning or Lord Wellesley at the same age, Mr. H[ogg] says justly that Shelley had a great facility of Latin versification. He proved himself also an excellent Latin scholar, by translating in his leisure hours, several Books of Pliny the Elder, "the enlightened and benevolent," as he styled him, that Encyclopædist whose works he greatly admired, and whose chapter *De Deo* was the first germ of his ideas respecting the Nature of God. Shelley had intended to make a complete version of his Natural History, but stopped short at the chapters on Astronomy, which Dr. Lind, whom he consulted, told him the best scholars could not understand. No author is more difficult to render than Pliny the Elder, for I remember it took me half a day to translate one passage, that most beautiful one, about the nightingale—probably itself a translation from some lost Greek Lyric; but Shelley's MS.—and what a MS.! what a free, splendid hand he wrote—was almost pure. I could have wished that Mrs. Shelley, if she possessed this early production, had given some speci-

¹ The late Denis Florence MacCarthy (*Shelley's Early Life*, 1872) found in *The Oxford Herald* of Sep-

tember 16, 1809, an English epigram
*On Seeing a French Watch round the Neck
 of a Beautiful Young Woman :*

Mark what we gain from foreign lands,
 Time cannot now be said to linger,—
 Allow'd to lay his two rude hands
 Where others *dare* not lay a finger.

mens of what was a remarkable effort for a mere boy. His knowledge of Greek was at that time superficial, but he, in after years, became sensible, as I have often heard him say, of the great inferiority of Latin authors—of the Latin language, to the Greek, and learned to draw from those richer fountains which he found inexhaustible—to form his lyrics on the Choruses of Sophocles and Æschylus, and his prose on Plato, which he considered a model of style.

Shelley made few, if any intimacies at Eton, and I never heard him mention in after life one of his class-fellows, and I believe their very names had escaped him,—unlike Lord Byron, who never forgot those in his own form, nor, indeed, what is still more remarkable, as proved in the instance of Proctor, the order in which those in a lower one stood. But Shelley's companions were his books, which he calls "the best Society"; not that he was either morose or unsocial, and must have had a rather large circle of friends, since his parting breakfast at Eton cost £50; and Mr. Hogg says "he possessed an unusual number of books, Greek and Latin, each inscribed with the name of the donor, which had been presented to him, according to the custom, on quitting Eton,"—a proof that Shelley had been popular among his school-fellows, many of whom were then at Oxford, and they frequently called at his rooms, and although he spoke with regard, he generally avoided an association with them, for it interfered with his beloved study, and interrupted the pursuits to which he ardently and devotedly attached himself.

He told me the greatest delight he experienced at Eton, was from boating, for which he had, as I have already mentioned, early acquired a taste. I was present at a regatta at which he assisted, in 1809, and seemed to enjoy with great zest. A wherry was his *beau idéal* of

happiness, and he never lost the fondness with which he regarded the Thames, no new acquaintance when he went to Eton, for at Brentford we had more than once played the truant, and rowed to Kew, and once to Richmond, where we saw Mrs. Jordan, in *The Country Girl*, at that theatre, the first Shelley had ever visited. It was an era in my life. But he had no fondness for theatrical representations; and in London, afterwards, rarely went to the play except to see his Beau Ideal of an actress, Miss O'Neill.

I now bring Shelley, his school education completed, back to Field-place. We had always been much together during the vacations, and constantly corresponded, and it is a matter of deep regret to me that I did not preserve those letters, the tenor of which was partly literary, and partly metaphysical. Such literature! and such metaphysics! both rather crude. I have a vivid recollection of the walks we took in the winter of 1809. There is something in a frosty day, when the sun is bright, the sky clear, and the air rarefied, which acts like a sort of intoxication. On such days Shelley's spirits used to run riot, his "sweet and subtle talk" was to me inebriating and electric. He had begun to have a longing for authorship—a dim presentiment of his future fame—an ambition of making a name in the world. We that winter wrote, in alternate chapters, the commencement of a wild and extravagant romance, where a hideous witch played the principal part, and whose portrait—not a very inviting one—is given in *The Wandering Jew*, of which I shall have occasion to speak, almost versified from a passage in our *Nightmare*.

When suddenly, a meteor's glare
With brilliant flash illumed the air,
Bursting thro' clouds of sulphurous smoke,
As from a witch's form it broke :

Of Herculean bulk her frame
 Seemed blasted by the lightning's flame—
 Her eyes, that flared with lurid light,
 Were now with bloodshot lustre filled,
 And now thick rheumy gore distilled;
 Black as the raven's plume, her locks
 Loose streamed upon the pointed rocks—
 Wild floated on the hollow gale,
 Or swept the ground in matted trail:
 Vile loathsome weeds, whose pitchy fold
 Were blackened by the fire of Hell,
 Her shapeless limbs of giant mould
 Scarce served to hide, as she the while
 Grinned horribly a ghastly smile,
 And shrieked with hideous yell.

Shelley having abandoned prose for poetry, now formed a *grand* design, to write a metrical romance on the subject of the Wandering Jew, of which the first three cantos were, with a few additions and alterations, almost entirely mine. It was a sort of thing such as boys usually write, a cento from different favourite authors; the vision in the third canto taken from Lewis's *Monk*, of which, in common with Byron, he was a great admirer; and the Crucifixion scene, altogether a plagiarism from a volume of Cambridge Prize Poems. The part which I supplied is still in my possession. After seven or eight cantos were *perpetrated*, Shelley sent them to Campbell for his opinion on their merits, with a view to publication. The author of *The Pleasures of Hope* returned the MS. with the remark, that there were only two good lines in it:

It seemed as if an angel's sigh
 Had breathed the plaintive symphony.*

Lines, by the way, savouring strongly of Walter Scott

* The passage ran thus:—

She ceased, and on the listening ear
 Her pensive accents died—
 So sad they were, so softly clear,

This criticism of Campbell's gave a death-blow to our hopes of immortality, and so little regard did Shelley entertain for the production, that he left it at his lodgings in Edinburgh, where it was disinterred by some correspondent of *Fraser's*, and in whose magazine, in 1831, four of the cantos appeared.¹ The others he very wisely did not think worth publishing.

It must be confessed that Shelley's contributions to this juvenile attempt were far the best, and those, with my MS. before me, I could, were it worth while, point out, though the contrast in the style, and the inconsequence of the opinions on religion, particularly in the last canto, are sufficiently obvious to mark two different hands, and show which passages were his. There is a song at the end of the fourth canto which is very musical :

See yon opening rose
Spreads its fragrance to the gale !
It fades within an hour !
Its decay is fast—is pale—
Paler is yon maiden,
Faster is her heart's decay—
Deep with sorrow laden
She sinks in death—away.

The finale of *The Wandering Jew* is also Shelley's, and proves that thus early he had imbibed opinions which were often the subject of our controversies. We differed also as to the conduct of the poem. It was my wish to

It seemed as if an angel's sigh
Had breathed a plaintive symphony :
So ravishingly sweet their close.

¹ I am not prepared to reject Medwin's claim to the authorship of the greater part of the rubbish called *The Wandering Jew*, which was reprinted by the late lamented Shelley Society in 1887 as "A Poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley." Those

who are curious on the subject should consult Mr. Bertram Dobell's introduction to the Society's book, which is by no means difficult to obtain. Editors still exclude the work from the fold.

put an end to the Wandering Jew—a consummation Shelley would by no means consent to. Mrs. Shelley is strangely misinformed as to the history of the fragment, which I, not Shelley, picked up in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields (as mentioned in my preface to *Ahasuerus*), and which was not found till some of the cantos had been written. Byron was well acquainted with this fragment,* which appeared with many additions in one of the notes to *Queen Mab*, and owes to it the passage in *Manfred*:

I have affronted Death, but in the storm
Of elements, the water shrunk from me,
And fatal things passed harmless: the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless demon *held me back*,
Back by a single hair—I could not die.

Ahasuerus ever continued a favourite with Shelley. He introduces him into *Queen Mab*, where is to be found a passage, but slightly changed, from the original *Wandering Jew*, which he took as an epigraph of a chapter in his *Rosicrucian*.

E'en as a giant oak, which Heaven's fierce flame
Has scathed in the wilderness, to stand
A monument of fadeless ruin there;
Yet powerfully and movelessly it bears
The midnight conflict of the wintry waves.†

* The Serpent stung but could not destroy me. The Dragon tormented but dared not to devour me. The foaming billows cast me on the shore, and the burning arrows of existence pierced my cold heart again. *The restless Curse held me by the hair*, and I could not die.—*Notes to Queen Mab*, p. 29.

† Still like the scathed pine tree's height,
Braving the tempest of the night;
Have I 'scaped the bickering fire—
Like the shattered pine, which a monument stands
Of faded grandeur, which the brands
Of the tempest-shaken air
Have riven on the desolate heath;
Yet it stands majestic e'en in death,
And raises its wild form there.

Wandering Jew, *Fraser's Mag.*, 1831, p. 672.

Ahasuerus is also made to figure in *Hellas*, and we find in *Alastor* the following aspiration :

O ! that God,
 Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice,
 Which but one living man has drained, who now,
 Vessel of deathless wrath, wanders for ever,
 Lone as incarnate Death.

But Shelley was not the first who has been struck with the poetical capabilities of such a character. Voltaire makes him play a part in the *Henriade*, and says :

C'étoit un de ces Hébreux,
 Qui proscrire sur la terre, et citoyens du monde,
 Portent de mers en mers leur misère profonde,
 Et d'un antique amas de superstitions,
 Ont remplis de longtemps toutes les nations.

In order to dispose of this subject, I will add, that after Shelley had been matriculated, on his visit to the Bodleian, the first question he put to the librarian, was, whether he had *The Wandering Jew*. He supposed Shelley meant the Periodical so entitled, edited, I believe, by the Marquis d'Argens, who formed one of the wits composing the literary court of Frederick the Great, but told him he knew of no book in German by that name. German was at that time little cultivated in England. There were, I believe, no translations then extant of Schiller. Göthe was only known by *The Sorrows of Werther*, and Canning and Frere had, in *The Antijacobin*, thrown ridicule on the poetry of that country, which long lasted. Shelley had imagined that the great Oxford library contained all books in all languages, and was much disappointed. He was not aware that the fragment which I had accidentally found was not a separate publication, but mixed up with the works of Schubard [*sic*], and had been copied, I believe, from a Magazine of the day.

Shelley's favourite poet in 1809 was Southey. He had read *Thalaba* till he almost knew it by heart, and had drenched himself with its metrical beauty.

I have often heard him quote that exquisite passage, where the Enchantress winds round the finger of her victim a single hair, till the spell becomes inextricable—the charm cannot be broken. But he still more doted on *Kehamah*, the Curse of which I remember Shelley often declaiming:

And water shall see thee!
And fear thee, and fly thee!
The waves shall not touch thee
As they pass by thee!

And this curse shall be on thee,
For ever and ever.

I transcribe the passage from memory, for I have never read since that romance he used to look upon as perfect; and was haunted by the witch Loranite, raving enthusiastically about the lines, beginning:

Is there a child whose little winning ways
Would lure all hearts, on whom its parents gaze
Till they shed tears of tenderest delight,
Oh hide her from the eye of Loranite!

Wordsworth's writings were at that time by no means to his taste. It was not sufficiently refined to enjoy his simplicity, he wanted something more exciting. Chatterton was then one of his great favourites; he enjoyed very much the literary forgery and successful mystification of Horace Walpole and his contemporaries; and the Immortal Child's melancholy and early fate often suggested his own. One of his earliest effusions was a fragment beginning—it was indeed almost taken from the pseudo Rowley:

Hark! the owlet flaps his wings
 In the pathless dell beneath;
 Hark! 'tis the night-raven sings
 Tidings of approaching death.

I had had lent me the translation of Bürger's *Leonora*, with Lady Diana Beauclerk's talented illustrations, which so perfectly breathe the spirit of that wild, magical, romantic, fantastic ballad, perhaps without exception the most stirring in any language. It produced on Shelley a powerful effect; and I have in my possession a copy of the whole poem, which he made with his own hand. The story is by no means original, if not taken from an old English ballad. For the *refrain*,

How quick ride the dead,

which occurs in so many stanzas, Bürger is indebted to an old *Volkslied*, was indeed inspired by hearing in the night sung from the church-yard:

Der Mond, der scheint so helle,
 Die Todten reiten so schnelle,
 Feinliebchen, graut dir nicht?

Situate as Horsham is on the borders of St. Leonard's Forest, into which we used frequently to extend our peregrinations,—a forest that has ever been the subject of the legends of the neighbouring peasantry, in whose gloomy mazes,

The adders never styng,
 Nor ye nightyngales synge,—

Shelley very early imbibed a love of the marvellous, and, according to one of those legends, "Wo to the luckless wight who should venture to cross it alone on horseback during the night, for no sooner has he entered its darksome precincts, than a horrible decapitated spectre disregarding all prayers and menaces, leaps behind him on his good steed, and accompanies the affrighted traveller

to the boundaries, where his power ceases." It was only another, and perhaps a more poetical version of the story of Leonora, and which Shelley had at one time an idea of working out himself. But St. Leonard's is equally famous for its dragon, or serpent, of which a "True and Wonderful Discourse" was printed at London in 1614, by John Trundle, and to the truth of which three persons then living affixed their signatures. Who could resist a faith in the being of a monster so well certificated? Certainly Shelley was not inclined to do so, as a boy; and if he had read Schiller's *Fight of the Dragon at Rhodes*, where, by the way, one of his ancestors was slain, in the words of the pedigree, "at winning the battle of the said Isle by the Turks," he would have been still more confirmed in his belief.

Many of these details may appear trivial, but they are not so to the physiologist, inasmuch as they serve to show how the accidental incidents of early impressions, if they did not model, influenced the direction of his mind. Admitting that *Poeta nascitur, non fit*, I am firmly persuaded of the truth of the above observation; for as all animals have brains like ourselves, dependent on organization, and an instructive kind of knowledge, adapted accordingly; and this instructive knowledge, although perfect in its way at the first, being capable of being influenced by new and altered circumstances; why should not, then, the different circumstances of early life assist the character, and give the bent to a poetical imagination? Animals, as well as ourselves, have intellectual qualities,—the difference is in degree, not in kind; but over and above this, they must have a something super-added, to make the difference, which is the faculty of taking cognizance of things wholly above the senses, of

things spiritual and moral—a sense independent of the bodily brain, independent of themselves, and having a natural supremacy in the mind over and above all its other powers. I do not mean to say that a La Place, a Newton, or a Shakspeare, if we had sufficient data to trace the progress of their education, could be reproduced, according to the Helvetian doctrine, by following the same course, for as men are born with different constitutions, features, and habits of body, mental organization must be of course also differently organized. Yet no mind can be developed without preliminary education, and, consequently, all the minutiae of this education must more or less exercise a modifying influence on it, as every physiologist in the natural history of animals can testify.

Shelley, like Byron, knew early what it was to love—almost all great poets have. It was in the summer of this year, that he became acquainted with our cousin, Harriet Grove. Living in distant counties, they then met for the first time, since they had been children, at Field-place, where she was on a visit. She was born, I think, in the same year with himself.

She was like him in lineaments—her eyes,
Her hair, her features, they said were like to his,
But softened all and tempered into beauty.

After so long an interval, I still remember Miss Harriet Grove, and when I call to mind all the women I have ever seen, I know of none that surpassed, or that could compete with her. She was like one of Shakspeare's women—like some Madonna of Raphael. Shelley, in a fragment written many years after, seems to have had her in his mind's eye, when he writes :

They were two cousins, almost like to twins,
Except that from the catalogue of sins

Nature had razed their love, which could not be,
 But in dissevering their nativity;
 And so they grew together like two flowers
 Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
 Lull or awaken in the purple prime.

Indeed it is easy to recognize himself and Miss Harriet Grove under the Italian names of Cosimo and Fiordispina. In the first, a new passion obscures the image of the idol still adored, but if she is no longer the object of this inconstant love, she remains love itself, a planet shining with brilliancy among the heavenly spheres, and regulating the motions of an Intelligence for ever subjected to its influence.

Young as they were, it is not likely that they had entered into a formal engagement with each other, or that their parents looked upon their attachment, if it were mentioned, as any other than an intimacy natural to such near relations, or the mere fancy of a moment; and after they parted, though they corresponded regularly, there was nothing in the circumstance that called for observation. Shelley's love, however, had taken deep root, as proved by the dedication to *Queen Mab*, written in the following year.

TO HARRIET G.—¹

Whose is the love that gleaming thro' the world,
 Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn?
 Whose is the warm and partial strain,
 Virtue's own sweet reward?

¹ Medwin may, of course, have seen early draftings towards *Queen Mab*, and lines of dedication "to Harriet G."; but it is probably one of his muddles that we are face to face with here. (See, however, *post*, pp. 91 and 93.) I know of no authority for heading the dedication to *Queen*

Mab thus. Shelley's private print of 1813 heads it *To Harriet* * * * * *; but in 1821 when the book was pirated, he congratulated himself on the absence of the dedication to his "late wife." See letter to Charles Ollier in Ingpen's collection of the Letters of Shelley, p. 876.

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul
 Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow?
 Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
 And loved mankind the more?

Harriet! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind—
 Thou wert the inspiration of my song—
 Thine are these early wilding flowers
 Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledge of love,
 And know, though time may change and years may roll;
 Each floweret gathered in my heart,
 It consecrates to thine.

But the lady was not alone “the inspiration of his song.” In the latter end of this year, he wrote a novel, that might have issued from the Minerva Press, entitled *Zastrozzi*, which embodies much of the intensity of the passion that devoured him; and some of the chapters were, he told me, by Miss Grove.

In this wild romance there are passages sparkling with brilliancy. A reviewer—for it was reviewed, but in what periodical I forget—spoke of it as a book of much promise. It was shortly followed by another Rosa-Matilda-like production, entitled *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian*.

The Rosicrucian was suggested by *St. Leon*, which Shelley wonderfully admired. He read it till he believed that there was truth in Alchymy, and the *Elixir Vitæ*, which indeed entered into the plot of *The Wandering Jew*, of which I possess a preface by him, intended for the poem, had it been published. He says:—

“The opinion that gold can be made, passed from the Arabs to the Greeks, and from the Greeks to the rest of Europe; those who professed it, gradually assumed the form of a sect, under the name of Alchymists. These Alchymists laid it down as a first principle, that all metals are composed of the same materials, or that the substances at least that form gold, exist in all metals, contaminated indeed by various impurities, but capable of being brought to a perfect state.

by purification ; and hence that considerable quantities of gold might be extracted from them. The generality of this belief in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, is proved by a remarkable edict of Dioclesian, [*sic*], quoted by Gibbon from the authority of two ancient historians, &c."

But if Shelley was at that time a believer in alchymy, he was even as much so in the *Panacea*. He used to cite the opinion of Dr. Franklin, whom he swore by, that "a time would come, when mind will be predominant over matter, or in other words, when a thorough knowledge of the human frame, and the perfection of medical science, will counteract the decay of Nature." "What," added he, "does Condorcet say on the subject?" and he read me the following passage :

"Is it absurd to suppose this quality of amelioration in the human species as susceptible of an indefinite advancement ; to suppose that a period must one day arrive, when death will be nothing more than the effect either of extraordinary accident, or of the slow and gradual decay of the vital powers ; and that the duration of the middle space, of the interval between the birth of man and his decay, will have no assignable limit ?"

On such opinions was based *The Rosicrucian*. It was written before he went to Oxford, and published by Stockdale ; the scene, singularly enough, is laid at Geneva, and from this juvenile effort I shall hereafter make some extracts in prose and verse, in order to show the elements of what it gave rise afterwards to—

Creations vast and fair,
As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.

During the last two years of his stay at Eton, he had, as I have already stated, imbued himself with Pliny the Elder, especially being struck with the chapter *De Deo*, and studied deeply Lucretius, whom he considered the best of the Latin poets, and with him he referred at that time, as will be seen from the following extract,

all creation to the power of Nature. It must be remembered that it is the Rosicrucian who speaks:—

“From my earliest youth, before it was quenched by complete satiation, *curiosity*, and a desire of unveiling the latent mysteries of nature, was the passion by which all the other emotions of my mind were intellectually organised. This desire led me to cultivate, and with success, the various branches of learning which led to the gates of wisdom. I then applied myself to the cultivation of philosophy, and the *éclat* with which I pursued it, exceeded my most sanguine expectations. Love I cared not for, and wondered why men per-
versely sought to ally themselves to weakness. Natural philosophy at last became the peculiar science to which I directed my eager enquiries; thence I was led into a train of labyrinthine meditations. I thought of *death*—I shuddered when I reflected, and shrunk in horror from the idea, *selfish* and *self-interested* as I was, of entering a new existence to which I was a stranger. I must either dive into the recesses of futurity, or I must not—I cannot die. Will not this nature—will not this *matter* of which it is composed, exist to all eternity? Ah! I know it will, and by the exertion of the energies with which nature has gifted me, well I know it shall. This was my opinion at that time: I then believed that there existed no God. Ah! at what an exorbitant price have I bought the conviction that there is!! Believing that priestcraft and superstition were all the religion which *man* ever practised, it could not be supposed that I thought there existed supernatural beings of any kind. I believed *Nature* to be self-sufficient and excelling. I supposed not, therefore, that there could be anything beyond nature. I was now about seventeen; I had dived into the depths of metaphysical calculations; with sophistical arguments, had I convinced myself of the non-existence of a First Cause, and by every combined modification of the essences of matter, had I apparently proved that no existences could possibly be, unseen by human vision.”¹

¹ This is a fairly correct transcript from pp. 187-9 of *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian* (1811). An exact reprint may be seen at pages 269-71 of the first volume of Shelley's *Prose Works* (4 vol. 1880). The verses from *St. Irvyne* are also taken with reasonable accuracy from the book itself. I have amended a few trifling errors of transcription; but

one obvious improvement, in line 13 of the first song, I leave because it looks like an authentic correction, —“in the whirlwind upfolding” for “on the whirlwind upholding.” The statement that some of them were written “a year or two before the date of the *Romance*” derives some support from outside evidence: see notes, *post*, pp. 53 and 54.

This work contains several poems, some of which were written a year or two before the date of the Romance, and which I insert in these memorabilia, more as literary curiosities, than for their intrinsic merit, though some of them may bear comparison with those contained in Byron's *Hours of Idleness*. Three of them are in the metre of Walter Scott's *Helvellyn*, a poem he greatly admired, although *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was little to his taste.

SONG.

'Twas dead of the night, when I sat in my dwelling
 One glimmering lamp was expiring and low,
 Around, the dark tide of the tempest was swelling,
 Along the wild mountains night-ravens were yelling,
 They bodingly presaged destruction and woe:

'Twas then that I started! the wild storm was howling,
 Nought was seen save the lightning which danced in the sky.
 Above me, the crash of the thunder was rolling,
 And low chilling murmurs the blast wafted by.

My heart sunk within me, unheeded the war
 Of the battling clouds on the mountain-tops broke,
 Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed in mine ear,
 This heart, hard as iron, is stranger to fear;
 But conscience in low, noiseless whispering spoke.

'Twas then that, her form in the whirlwind upfolding,
 The ghost of the murdered Victoria strode,
 In her right hand a shadowy shroud she was holding,
 She swiftly advanced to my lonesome abode.

I wildly then called on the tempest to bear me.—

SONG.

Ghosts of the dead! have I not heard your yelling,
 Rise on the night-rolling breath of the blast,
 When o'er the dark ether the tempest was swelling,
 And on eddying whirlwind the thunder-peals past.

For oft have I stood on the dark height of Jura,
 Which frowns on the valley that opens beneath;
 Oft have I braved the chill night-tempest's fury,
 Whilst around me I thought echoed murmurs of death.
 And now whilst the winds of the mountain are howling,
 O Father! thy voice seems to strike on mine ear.
 In air, whilst the tide of the night-storm is rolling,
 It breaks on the pause of the element's jar.
 On the wing of the whirlwind which roars o'er the mountain,
 Perhaps rides the ghost of my sire who is dead,
 On the mist of the tempest which hangs o'er the fountain,
 Whilst a wreath of dark vapour encircles his head.

SONG.¹

How stern are the woes of the desolate mourner,
 As he bends in still grief o'er the hallowed bier,
 As enanguished he turns from the laugh of the scorner,
 And drops to Perfection's remembrance a tear;
 When floods of despair down his pale cheek are streaming,
 When no blissful hope on his bosom is beaming,
 Or if lulled for a while, soon he starts from his dreaming,
 And finds torn the soft ties to affection so dear.
 Ah! when shall day dawn on the night of the grave,
 Or summer succeed to the winter of death?
 Rest awhile, hapless victim! and heaven will save
 The spirit that faded away with the breath.
 Eternity points in its amaranth bower,
 Where no clouds of fate o'er the sweet prospect lower,
 Unspeakable pleasure, of goodness the dower,
 When woe fades away like the mist of the heath.

SONG.

Ah! faint are her limbs, and her footstep is weary,
 Yet far must the desolate wanderer roam,
 Though the tempest is stern, and the mountain is dreary,
 She must quit at deep midnight her pitiless home.

¹ That this song existed apart from *St. Irvyne* is unquestionable. It is to be found, with slight verbal variations, in a letter to Edward Graham imperfectly dated, but

assigned to the year 1810, published for the first time in Mr. Ingpen's edition of Shelley's Letters, vol. i, pp. 9-10.

I see her swift foot dash the dew from the whortle,
 As she rapidly hastes to the green grove of myrtle;
 And I hear, as she wraps round her figure the kirtle,
 "Stay thy boat on the lake, dearest Henry! I come!"

High swelled in her bosom the throb of affection,
 As lightly her form bounded over the lea,
 And arose in her mind every dear recollection,
 "I come, dearest Henry, and wait but for thee!"
 How sad, when dear hope every sorrow is soothing,
 When sympathy's swell the soft bosom is moving,
 And the mind the mild joys of affection is proving,
 Is the stern voice of fate that bids happiness flee.

Oh! dark lowered the clouds on that horrible eve,
 And the moon dimly gleamed through the tempested air,
 Oh! how could fond visions such softness deceive?
 Oh how could false hope rend a bosom so fair?
 Thy love's pallid corse the wild surges are laving,
 On his form the fierce swell of the tempest is raving,
 But fear not, parting spirit! thy goodness is saving,
 In eternity's bower, a seat for thee there.

SONG.¹

How swiftly through Heaven's wide expanse
 Bright day's resplendent colours fade!
 How sweetly does the moonbeam's glance
 With silver tint St. Irvyne's glade!

No cloud along the spangled air
 Is borne upon the evening breeze;
 How solemn is the scene! how fair
 The moonbeams rest upon the trees!

¹ This song from *St. Irvyne* is certainly a retrenched and revised version of a poem of ten quatrains embodied in a tattered and imperfect letter to Edward Graham, sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their auction of autograph letters and books on the 31st of March, 1909. *The Athenæum*, on the 5th of the following June,

published a letter from me, giving an account of this document, which contains five quatrains not included in the *St. Irvyne* Song, between the fourth and fifth, but does not contain the sixth quatrain. The letter is dated April 22, and seems to belong to 1810. The remains of it will be found among the early letters in the Appendix.

Yon dark grey turret glimmers white,
 Upon it sits the gloomy owl,
 Along the stillness of the night,
 Her melancholy shriekings roll.

But not alone on Irvyne's tower
 The silver moonbeam pours her ray;
 It gleams upon the ivied bower,
 It dances in the cascade's spray.

"Ah! why do darkening shades conceal
 The hour when man must cease to be?
 Why may not human minds unveil
 The dim mists of futurity?"

The keenness of the world hath torn
 The heart which opens to its blast;
 Despised, neglected and forlorn,
 Sinks the wretch in death at last."

BALLAD.

The death-bell beats,
 The mountain repeats
 The echoing sound of the knell;
 And the dark Monk now
 Wraps the cowl round his brow,
 As he sits in his lonely cell.

And the cold hand of death
 Chills his shuddering breath,
 As he lists to the fearful lay
 Which the ghosts of the sky,
 As they sweep wildly by,
 Sing to departed day.
 And they sing of the hour
 When the stern Fates had power
 To resolve Rosa's form to its clay.

But that hour is past
 And that hour was the last
 Of peace to the dark Monk's brain;
 Bitter tears, from his eyes, gush'd silent and fast;
 And he strove to suppress them in vain.

Then his fair cross of gold he dashed on the floor,
When the death-knell struck on his ear—
“Delight is in store for her evermore,
But for me is fate, horror, and fear.”

Then his eyes wildly rolled,
When the death-bell tolled,
And he raged in terrific woe;
And he stamped on the ground,
But when ceased the sound,
Tears again begun to flow.

And the ice of despair
Chilled the wild throb of care,
And he sate in mute agony still:
Till the night-stars shone thro' the cloudless air,
And the pale moonbeam slept on the hill.

Then he knelt in his cell,
And the horrors of hell
Were delights to his agonised pain,
And he prayed to God to dissolve the spell,
Which else must ever remain.

And in fervent prayer he knelt on the ground,
Till the abbey-bell struck one;
His feverish blood ran chill at the sound,
A voice hollow and horrible murmured around,
“The term of thy penance is done!”

Grew dark the night;
The moonbeam bright
Waxed faint on the mountain high;
And from the black hill
Went a voice cold and still—
“Monk! thou art free to die.”

Then he rose on his feet,
And his heart loud did beat,
And his limbs they were palsied with dread;
Whilst the grave's clammy dew
O'er his pale forehead grew;
And he shuddered to sleep with the dead.

And the wild midnight storm
Raved around his tall form,
As he sought the chapel's gloom;
And the sunk grass did sigh
To the wind, bleak and high,
As he search'd for the new-made tomb.

And forms dark and high
Seem'd around him to fly,
And mingle their yells with the blast;
And on the dark wall
Half-seen shadows did fall,
As enhorror'd he onward pass'd.

And the storm-fiend's wild rave
O'er the new made grave,
And dread shadows, linger around,
The Monk call'd on God his soul to save,
And in horror sank on the ground.

Then despair nerved his arm,
To dispel the charm,
And he burst Rosa's coffin asunder.
And the fierce storm did swell
More terrific and fell,
And louder peal'd the thunder.

And laugh'd, in joy, the fiendish throng,
Mix'd with ghosts of the mouldering dead;
And their grisly wings, as they floated along,
Whistled in murmurs dread.

And her skeleton form the dead Nun rear'd,
Which dripp'd with the chill dew of hell.
In her half-eaten eye-balls two pale flames appear'd,
But triumphant their gleam on the dark Monk glar'd,
As he stood within the cell.

And her lank hand lay on his shuddering brain,
But each power was nerv'd by fear.—
“I never, henceforth, may breathe again;
Death now ends mine anguish'd pain;
The grave yawns—we meet there.”

And her skeleton lungs did utter the sound,
 So deadly, so lone, and so fell,
 That in long vibrations shudder'd the ground,
 And as the stern notes floated around,
 A deep groan was answer'd from Hell!

Such was the sort of poetry Shelley wrote at this period—and it is valuable, inasmuch as it serves to shew the disposition and bent of his mind in 1808 and 1809, which ran on bandits, castles, ruined towers, wild mountains, storms and apparitions—the Terrific, which according to Burke is the great machinery of the Sublime. In the beginning of the first of these two years, I showed Shelley some poems to which I had subscribed by Felicia Browne,¹ whom I had met in North Wales, where she had been on a visit at the house of a connection of mine. She was then sixteen, and it was impossible not to be struck with the beauty (for beautiful she was), the grace, and charming simplicity and *naïveté* of this interesting girl—and on my return from Denbighshire, I made her and her works the frequent subject of conversation with Shelley. Her

¹ Professor Dowden takes this tale seriously enough (*Life of Shelley*, vol. i, pp. 49–50), though Shelley's sister Hellen did not know of any long correspondence with Felicia Browne,—aged fourteen years, not sixteen as Medwin says. For the rest, when a historian's reputation for accuracy is indifferent, chances to verify his statements may advantageously be taken. The handsome quarto volume of *Poems, by Felicia Dorothea Browne*, Liverpool, 1808, has a voluminous list of subscribers occupying pp. ix–xxvi; and in due alphabetical order we find the name of "Tho. Medwin, jun. Esq. Horsham, Sussex." The fact that the young lady's early works attracted Byron and Shelley stands chronicled in the Memoir prefixed to the *Poetical*

Remains of the late Mrs. Hemans (Blackwood, 1836, p. xv). Among these posthumous poems is *The Broken Lyre*—a piece quite worthy of Mrs. Hemans's reputation, and showing the influence of Shelley not only by the epigraph consisting of twelve lines from "When the lamp is shattered," but also by the obvious presence of *The Sensitive Plant* in the author's mind. In her *National Lyrics, and Songs for Music* (Dublin, 1834) she had included a poem called *The Swan and the Skylark* with an epigraph of four lines from Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* and a stanza from Shelley's *Skylark*; and there is another charming poem, *A Song of the Rose*, written in the actual metre of Shelley's *Skylark*.

juvenile productions, remarkable certainly for her age—and some of those which the volume contained were written when she was a mere child—made a powerful impression on Shelley, ever enthusiastic in his admiration of talent; and with a prophetic spirit he foresaw the coming greatness of that genius, which under the name of Hemans afterwards electrified the world.

He desired to become acquainted with the young authoress, and using my name, wrote to her, as he was in the habit of doing to all those who in any way excited his sympathies. This letter produced an answer, and a correspondence of some length passed between them, which of course I never saw, but it is to be supposed that it turned on other subjects besides poetry. I mean, that it was sceptical. It has been said by her biographer, and proved by one of the longest of her Poems, *The Sceptic*, that she was deeply imbued with Shelley's Pantheism, that the poetess was at one period of her life, as is the case frequently with deep thinkers on religion, inclined to doubt; and it is not impossible that such owed its origin to this interchange of thought. One may indeed suppose this to have been the case, from the circumstance of her mother writing to my father, and begging him to use his influence with Shelley to cease from any further communication with her daughter,—in fact, prohibiting their further correspondence. Mrs. Hemans seems, however, to have been a great admirer of his poetry, and to have in some measure modelled her style after his, particularly in her last and most finished effusions, in which we occasionally find a line or two of Shelley's, proving that she was an attentive reader of his works. "Poets," as Shelley says, "the best of them, are a very chameleonic race, and take the colour not only of what

they feed on, but of the very leaves over which they pass."

It so happened that neither Shelley nor myself in after years mentioned Mrs. Hemans; indeed her finest lyrics were written subsequent to his death; I allude to those which appeared in *Blackwood*—the longer pieces I have never read,¹ nor I believe had Shelley, who looked upon prose as the best medium for such subjects as she has treated in them, the purely didactic and moral, as he has expressed in the preface to the *Prometheus Unbound*, where he says, "Didactic poetry is my abhorrence. Nothing can be equally well expressed in prose, that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse."

His days and nights at Oxford were dedicated to incessant study and composition, and soon after his arrival, he sent me a volume of poems published at Parkers', entitled the "Posthumous works of my Aunt Margaret Nicholson," in which were some stanzas to Charlotte Corday. It might easily be perceived that he had been reading the French revolutionary writers, from the tenor of this wild, half-mad production, the poetry of which was well worthy the subject.

The author of *Shelley at Oxford*, gives the following account of this extraordinary effort:—²

¹ We may assume that *The Sceptic*, about which he is rather silly above, and misrepresents the late H. F. Chorley (*Memorials of Mrs. Hemans*, 1836, vol. i, p. 48), was one of the pieces he never read. He was not alone in that abstinence, even if he possessed the work: my own copy—or one of my own copies—which I have turned to for this present note, has John Hookham Frere's autograph in it; but that notable writer of splendid verse did not even finish cutting it open. It

is a poem of some vigour, however, though not the work of one who had the makings of a sceptic.

² These paragraphs are in the main composed of the *ipsissima verba* of Hogg, snipped out of his last paper in *The New Monthly Magazine* (May, 1833), rearranged a little and much cut down. Though far better in point of humour and imagination than anything Medwin could have substituted for them, a grain of salt is good to be taken with them. I do not believe in Hogg's joint

"A mad washerwoman named Peg Nicholson, had attempted to stab King George the Third, with a carving knife—the story has been long forgotten, but it was then fresh in the recollection of every one; it was proposed that we should ascribe the poems to her. The poor woman was still living, and in green vigour, within the walls of Bedlam, but since her existence must be incompatible, there could be no harm in putting her to death, and in creating a nephew and administrator to his aunt's poetical works.

"The idea gave an object and purpose to our burlesque, for Shelley, although of a grave disposition, had a certain sly relish in a practical joke, so that it was ingenious and abstruse, and of a literary nature. To ridicule the strange mixture of sentimentality with the murderous fury of revolutionists, that was so powerful in the composition of the day, amused him much, and the proofs were altered again to adapt them to their new scheme, but still without any notion of publication. But the bookseller was pleased with the whimsical conceit, and asked to be permitted to publish the book on his own account, promising inviolate secrecy, and as many copies *gratis* as might be required. After some hesitation, permission was granted, upon the plighted honour of the trade. In a few days, or rather in a few hours, a noble quarto appeared,—it consisted of a small number of pages, it is true, but they were of the largest size, of the thickest, the whitest, and the smoothest drawing paper. The poor maniac laundress was grandly styled the late Mrs. Margaret Nicholson, widow; and the sonorous name of Fitzvictor had been culled for the inconsolable nephew and administrator; and to add to his dignity, the waggish printer had picked up some huge types of so unusual a form, that even an antiquary could not spell the words at the first glance. The effect was certainly striking. Shelley had torn open the large square bundle before the printer's boy quitted the room, and holding

authorship. However, his possession of a copy of the portentous quarto I can answer for; for it is in my library with Hogg's autograph on the half-title; and bound up with it now is a letter which Shelley wrote from Oxford about the book to his friend Graham. Here he says that a portion of the work, including the objectionable "verses about *sucking*" which Hogg mentions, was written by "a friend's mistress" and is "omitted in numbers of the copies," as for instance one

sent to the poet's mother. I never saw one of those copies. The book is extraordinarily rare. There is no hint in Shelley's letter of any male collaboration; but on the other hand Hogg's allegation of a rapid sale is supported by Shelley's own statement—"It sells wonderfully here, and is become the fashionable subject of discussion." I doubt whether Medwin had a copy; but perhaps his claim to have received one should be accepted.

out a copy with his hands, he ran about in an extacy of delight, gazing on the superb title-page.

"The first poem was a long one, condemning war in the lump, puling trash that might have been written by a quaker, and could only have been published in sober sadness by a society for the diffusion of that kind of knowledge which they deemed useful—useful for some end which they have not been pleased to reveal, and which unassisted reason is wholly incapable to discover. It contained many odes and other pieces professing an ardent attachment to freedom, and proposing to stab all who were less enthusiastic than the supposed authoress. There were some verses about *sucking* in them, to these I objected, as unsuitable to the gravity of an university, but Shelley declared they would be the most impressive of all.

"A few copies were sent as a special favour to trusty and sagacious friends at a distance, whose gravity would not permit them to suspect a hoax,—they read and admired, being charmed with the wild notes of liberty; some indeed presumed to censure mildly certain papers, as having been thrown off in too bold a vein. Nor was a certain success wanting; the remaining copies were rapidly sold in Oxford, at the aristocratic price of half-a-crown per half dozen pages. We used to meet gownsmen in High Street, reading the goodly volume, as they walked, pensive, with grave and sage delight,—some of them perhaps more pensive, because it seemed to pourtray the instant overthrow of all royalty, from a king to a court-card.

"What a strange delusion to admire such stuff—the concentrated essence of nonsense! It was indeed a kind of fashion to be seen reading it in public, as a mark of nice discernment, of a delicate and fastidious taste in poetry, and the very criterion of a choice spirit!"

Without stopping to enquire whether Mr. Hogg might not be mistaken in the sort of appreciation in which this regicide production was held, one can hardly conceive, in comparing this with *Queen Mab*, which Shelley says was written at 18, in 1809, that they were by the same hand. Though begun, it was not completed till 1812, nor the notes appended to it till the end of 1811, or the beginning of the succeeding year. It has been said, though I do not affirm it, that for these he was much indebted to Godwin, of whom he says, that he has been in moral philosophy

what Wordsworth is in poetry; and certainly the correctness, I might say the elegance of the style which they display, and the mass of information they contain on subjects with which, in 1809, he could not have been conversant, seems to show that he must have had some powerful assistance in the task. *Queen Mab* is undoubtedly a more extraordinary effort of genius than any on record,—and when I say this, I do not forget the early productions of Pope, of Chatterton, or Kirke White. It is the more wonderful when we consider, that vivid and truthful as his descriptions of nature are, he had never been made familiar with her wonders. Mrs. Shelley is mistaken in saying that “at the period of writing *Queen Mab*, he had been a great traveller in England, Scotland, and Ireland.” In fact he had never been 50 miles from his native home, but the country round Horsham is one of exceeding beauty, and imagination supplied what was wanting in reality. And I have often heard him say, that a poet has an instinctive sense of the truth of things, or, as he has expressed more fully the sentiment in his admirable *Treatise on Poetry*,

“He participates in the Eternal, the Infinite, and the One. As far as relates to his conception, time, and place, and number are not. Poetry is an interpretation of a divine nature, through our own; it compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know; it creates anew the universe; it justifies the bold words of Tasso: *Non merita nome di Creatore, se non Iddio ed il Poeta.*”

Compassion for his fellow creatures was the ruling motive that originated this poem.

“His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is bursting. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to erect a brotherhood of property and science, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of birth. He looked forward to a sort of millennium of freedom and

brotherhood. He saw in a fervent call on his fellow creatures to share alike the blessings of the Creator, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted."

Such was the spirit that dictated *Queen Mab*!

There is a vast deal of *twaddle* in Moore's *Life of Byron*, respecting early scepticism, where he says, "It and infidelity rarely find an entrance into youthful minds," adding,

"It is fortunate that these inroads are seldom felt in the mind till a period of life when the character, already formed, is out of the reach of their disturbing influence—when being the result, however erroneous, of thought and reasoning, they are likely to partake of the sobriety of the process by which they are acquired, and being considered but as matters of pure speculation, to have as little share in determining the mind towards evil, *as too often the most orthodox creeds have at the same age of influencing it towards good.*"

What the sense of these words marked in italics may be, is beyond my comprehension. But in my way of thinking, it is when the reasoning powers *are* matured—the effervescence of youth has somewhat cooled down—when the self-sufficiency of scholarship, the pride of being thought to think differently from the generality of the world, the vanity of running *a-muck* against received opinions, has yielded to reason and judgment, and man begins to know that he knows nothing, that he ceases to arrogate to himself a superiority over his fellows—learns to become humble and diffident; and this is not a state of mind that leads to doubt. Every superior mind will, says Emerson, pass thro' this domain of equilibration—I should rather say will know how to avail himself of the checks and balances in Nature—as a natural weapon against the exaggeration and formalism of bigots and blockheads. Scepticism is the attitude assumed by the student in relation to the particulars which Society adores, but which he sees to be revered only in their tendency and spirit—The ground

occupied by the sceptic is the vestibule of the temple. Society does not like to have any breath of aspersion blown on the existing order. But the interrogation of Custom at all points is an inevitable stage in the growth of every Superior Mind and is the evidence of its perception of the flowing power which remains itself in all changes. The Superior Mind will find itself equally at odds with the evils of Society and with the projects that are offered to relieve them—the wise Sceptic is a bad Citizen—No Conservative, he sees the Selfishness of property and the drowings of Institutions. But as to the unfrequency of scepticism in youth, Moore never laid down a more false or unphilosophical axiom. Why, he must have forgotten Gibbon, and Southey, and Cowper, and Malherbe, and Coleridge, and Kirke White, and a hundred others, himself included, (*vide* Little's Poems,) when he penned this startling and unborne-out proposition. If he means that, absorbed in dissipation, and carried away by their passions, most young men seldom reflect on subjects most worthy of reflection, I agree with him; but neither Byron nor Shelley were [*sic*] of this kind. They did not, as with the πολλοί, take for granted what had been inculcated; they were not contented with impressions, they wished to satisfy themselves that their impressions were right, and both fell into scepticism, one from presumption and an overweening, foolish ambition of making himself out worse than he was; and Shelley from what he really thought "a matter of pure speculation;" the result, however erroneous, to repeat Moore's words, "of thought and reasoning." Little dependence is however to be placed on the profession of faith contained in the two letters Byron wrote to Mr. Dallas, at 20, (in 1808,) in which his object clearly was—an object he carried out all his life, with his

biographer even more than any one else—*mystification*. Voltaire was his horn-book ; but in the list of works he says he had studied in different languages, he only confesses to have read his *Charles XII.*, though that scoffer at religion was his delight and admiration, and with him he fell into the slimy pool of materialism. Montaigne was the only great writer of past times whom he read with avowed satisfaction.

Shelley's scepticism produced different fruits—he would never have joined with Matthews, Hobhouse, Scrope Davies, and “beasts after their kind,” in those orgies which were celebrated at Newstead, when with Byron for an Abbot, they travestied themselves in monkish dresses. and the apparatus of beads and crosses, and passed their nights in intemperance and debauchery. No, his way of thinking never affected the purity of his morals. “Looking upon religion as it is professed, and above all practised, as hostile instead of friendly to the cultivation of those virtues that would make men brethren, he raised his voice against it, though by so doing he was perfectly aware of the odium he would incur, of the martyrdom to which he doomed himself. Older men, when they oppose their fellows, and transgress ordinary rules, carry a certain prudence or hypocrisy as a shield along with them ; but youth is rash, nor can it imagine, while asserting what it believes to be right, that it should be denounced as vicious and pronounced as criminal. Had he foreseen such a fate, he was too enthusiastic, and too full of hatred of all the ills of life he witnessed, not to scorn danger.” That fate was at hand. But I anticipate.

We come now to another epoch in the life of the poet—Shelley at Oxford:—

He was matriculated, and went to University College

at the commencement of Michaelmas term, at the end of October 1810. The choice of this college (though a respectable one, by no means of high repute) was made by his father for two reasons—first, that he had himself, as already mentioned, been a member of it,—and secondly, because it numbered among its benefactors some of his ancestors, one of whom had founded an Exhibition. I had left the university before he entered it, and only saw him once in passing through the city. “His rooms were in the corner next to the hall of the principal quadrangle, on the first floor, and on the right of the entrance, but by reason of the turn in the stairs, when you reach them, they will be on the right hand.¹ It is a spot, which I might venture to predict many of our posterity will hereafter reverently visit, and reflect an honour on that college, which has nothing so great to distinguish it.” The portrait of him drawn by his friend, from whom I have borrowed largely, corresponded with my recollection of him at this interview. “His figure was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much, that he seemed of low stature.” De Quincey² says, that he remembers seeing in London, a little Indian ink sketch of him in his academical costume of Oxford. The sketch tallying pretty well with a verbal description which he had heard of him in some company, viz., that he looked like an elegant and slender flower whose head drooped from being surcharged with rain.” Where is this sketch? How valuable would it be! “His clothes,” Mr. H[ogg] adds, “were expensive, and according

¹ Here Hogg's tribute to his friend is cruelly mangled: not only are the parts of the whole passage transposed and reworded within the quotation marks, but “on the

right hand” is substituted for the phrase “upon your left hand” in the *New Monthly* of February 1832, p. 136.

² *Tail's Magazine*, January 1846.

to the most approved mode of the day, but they were tumbled, rumbled, unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt, sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate, and almost feminine, of the purest red and white, yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having past the autumn, as he said, in shooting: "and he said rightly, for he had, during September, often carried a gun in his father's preserves; Sir Timothy being a keen sportsman, and Shelley himself an excellent shot, for I well remember one day in the winter of 1809, when we were out together, his killing at three successive shots, three snipes, to my great astonishment and envy, at the tail of the pond in front of Field-place.¹

"His features, his whole face, and his head, were particularly small, yet the last appeared of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence, and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers swiftly through his locks, unconsciously, so that it was singularly rough and wild—a particularity which he had at school. His features were not symmetrical, the mouth perhaps excepted, yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They

¹ To establish a relationship between Shelley as a sporting lad of seventeen and the redoubtable veteran Allan Quatermain would be a not impossible feat of criticism; but I do not seriously suggest that this tale of Medwin's about the three snipe is the source of the spirited incident of Quatermain and the three woodcock in *Mairova's Revenge* (1888, p. 5). The family relationship of the two birds, their zig-zag flight, and the number 3 common to the two anecdotes, do not suffice to cancel the probability of mere coincidence. I do not for a moment doubt the tale of Shelley's boyhood, on the ground that so keen a young sportsman is not easy to reconcile with the poet of *Alastor*,

who sang—

If no bright bird, insect, or
gentle beast
I consciously have injured, but
still loved
And cherished these my kin-
dred; then forgive
This boast, beloved brethren,
and withdraw
No portion of your wonted
favour now!

The lad Shelley has left one or two records less reconcilable with the lofty tone and character of the man than the perfunctory slaughter of birds in his father's preserves. Long before the new-birth of 1814, "sport" would have been impossible to the poet.

breathed an animation—a fire—an enthusiasm—a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual, for there was a softness and delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise many) an air of profound veneration, that characterises the best works, and chiefly the frescoes (and into these they infused their whole souls) of the great masters of Rome and Florence.”

“I observed, too, the same contradiction in his rooms, which I had often remarked in his person and dress. The carpet, curtain, and furniture were quite new, and had not passed through several generations of students on the payment of the thirds, that is, the third¹ price last given. This general air of freshness was greatly obscured by the indescribable confusion in which the various objects were mixed. Scarcely a single article was in its right place—books, boots, papers, shoes, philosophical instruments, clothes, pistols, linen, crockery, ammunition, and phials innumerable, with money, stockings, prints, crucibles, bags, and boxes, were scattered on the floor in every place, as if the young chemist, in order to analyze the mystery of creation, had endeavoured first to reconstruct the primæval chaos. The tables, and especially the carpet, were already stained with large spots of various hues, which frequently proclaimed the agency of fire. An electrical machine, an air pump, the galvanic trough, a solar microscope, and large glass jars and receivers, were conspicuous amidst the mass of matter. Upon the table by his side, were some books lying open, a bundle of new pens, and a bottle of japan ink, with many chips, and a handsome razor, that had been used as a knife. There were bottles of soda-water, sugar, pieces of lemon, and the traces of an effervescent beverage.”

Such, with some variations, was, as they come back on me, the appearance of Shelley and his rooms during this visit to him in the November of 1810.

He had not forgotten our Walker's Lectures, and was deep in the mysteries of chemistry, and had apparently, been making some experiments; but it is highly improbable that Shelley was qualified to succeed in that science, where scrupulous minuteness and a mechanical accuracy are indispensable. His chemical operations

¹ Medwin's bungle, this, of Hogg are “two-thirds of the price course. The words really used by last given.”

seemed to an unskilful observer to premise nothing but disasters. He had blown himself up at Eton. He had inadvertently swallowed some mineral poison, which he declared had seriously injured his health, and from the effects of which he should never recover. His hands, his clothes, his books, and his furniture were stained and covered by medical acids—more than one hole in the carpet could elucidate the ultimate phenomena of combustion, especially in the middle of the room, where the floor had also been burnt by his mixing ether with some other fluid in a crucible, and the honourable wound was speedily enlarged by rents, for the philosopher, as he hastily crossed the room in pursuit of truth, was frequently caught in it by the foot.

And speaking of electricity and chemistry, Mr. Hogg says, "I know little of the physical sciences, and felt therefore but a slight degree of interest in them. I looked upon his philosophical apparatus as toys and playthings, like a chess board. Through want of sympathy, his zeal, which was at first ardent, gradually cooled, and he applied himself to those pursuits, after a time less frequently, and with less earnestness." "The true value of these," Mr. H[ogg] adds, "was often the subject of animated discussion; and I remember one evening at my rooms, when he had sought refuge from the extreme cold in the little apartment or study, I referred, in the course of our debate to a passage in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, where Socrates speaks in dispraise of physics." But that Shelley, instead of disparaging, was almost inclined to overrate them, is proved by the great interest he took in 1820, in Mr. Reveley's steam-boat, and the active assistance he afforded him in completing the engine; and his imagination seems to have fallen back in his old pursuits, with

the delight of a boy, where he says, (he had been visiting the laboratory of the young engineer):—

Magical forms the brick floor overspread,
 Proteus transformed to metal, did not make
 More figures or more strange, nor did he take
 Such shapes of unintelligible brass,
 Or heap himself in such a horrid mass
 Of tin and iron, not to be understood,
 And forms of unimaginable wood,
 To puzzle Tubal Cain, and all his brood;
 Great screws, and cones, and wheels and grooved blocks,
 The elements of what will stand the shocks
 Of wave, and wind, and time; upon the table
 More knacks and quips there be, than I am able
 To catalogize in this verse of mine—
 A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,
 But quicksilver—that dew, which the gnomes drink—
 When at their subterranean toil they swink,
 Pledging the dæmons of the earthquake, who
 Reply to them in lava—cry “Halloo!”
 And call out to the cities o’er their head—
 Roofs, towers, and shrines—the dying and the dead
 Crash thro’ the chinks of earth—and then all quaff
 Another rouse, and hold their sides, and laugh.
 ‘This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within
 The walnut bowl it lies, veined and thin,
 In colour like the wake of light that stains
 The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains
 The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze
 Is still—blue Heaven smiles over the pale seas—
 And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I
 Yield to the impulse of an infancy
 Outlasting manhood—I have made to float
 The rude idealism of a paper boat:—
 A hollow screw with cogs.¹

On reading these beautifully imaginative lines, who will say with Wordsworth, that there is no poetry in a steam engine?

¹ I have amended a few words in this extract from the *Letter to Maria* Gisborne where Medwin’s copying was at fault.

But "the Weird Archimage," as Shelley calls himself, was right in abandoning chemistry. I doubt, with Mr. Hogg, whether he would ever have made a natural philosopher. As a boy he was fond of flying kites, and at Field Place, made an electrical one, an idea borrowed from Franklin, in order to draw lightning from the clouds—fire from Heaven, like a new Prometheus. But its phenomena did not alone excite his interest. He thought¹ "What a mighty instrument electricity might be in the hands of him who knew how to wield it, and in what manner to direct its omnipotent energies; what a terrible organ would the supernal shock prove, if we were able to guide it; how many of the secrets of nature could not such a stupendous force unlock! The galvanic battery," said Shelley, "is a new engine. It has been used hitherto to an insignificant extent, yet it has worked wonders already. What will not an extraordinary combination of troughs of colossal magnitude—a well arranged system of hundreds of metallic plates, effect? Shelley also speculated on the uses of chemistry as applied to agriculture, in transmuting an unfruitful region into a land of exuberant plenty; on generating from the atmospheric air, water in every situation, and in every quantity; and of the power of providing heat at will,"—adding, "what a comfort it would be to the poor at all times, and especially in the winter, if we could be masters of caloric, and could at will furnish them with a constant supply!"

"With such fervour," adds Mr. H[ogg], "did the slender and beardless boy speculate concerning the march of physical science; his speculations were as wild as the experience of twenty years had shown them to be, but the zealous earnestness for the augmentation of knowledge,

¹ Hogg, altered and adapted.

and the glowing philanthropy and boundless benevolence that marked them, are without parallel."

We had been more frequent correspondents than ever, since he became an Oxonian, and our friendly controversies were carried on with greater animation. But at this period of time the tenor, though not the nature, of them has entirely escaped me, and as I can draw from a most authentic source his metaphysical speculations, I shall make use of these materials in another place when I come to treat of them.

Mr. Hogg says that "Shelley knew nothing of German, but from the glimmering light of translation;" there I think he is mistaken, for on the occasion of this visit he showed me a volume of tales which he had himself rendered from the original. During half an hour that we were together, (I passed the whole day with him) I perused these MSS., and they gave me a very low idea of the literature of that country, then almost unknown in England. It was evident that the books that had fallen into his hands were from the pens of very inferior writers; and I told him he had lost his time and labour in clothing them in his own language, and that I thought he could write much better things himself. He showed and read to me many letters he had received in controversies he had originated with learned divines; among the rest with a bishop, under the assumed name of a woman.

"He had commenced this practice at Eton, and when he came to Oxford he retained and extended the former practice, keeping up the ball of doubt in letters, and of those he received many, so that the arrival of the postman was always an anxious moment to him. This practice he had learnt of a physician, from whom he had taken instructions in chemistry, and of whose character and talents he often spoke with profound veneration. It was indeed the usual course with men of learning, as their biographers and many volumes of such

epistles testify. The physician was an old man, and a man of the old school; he confined his epistolary discussions to matters of science, and so did his disciple for a long time; but when metaphysics usurped the place in his affections, that chemistry had before had, the latter fell into disceptations respecting existences still more subtle than gases and the electric fluid. The transition, however, from physics to metaphysics was gradual. Is the electric fluid material? he would ask his correspondent. Is light? Is the vital principle in vegetables?—in the human soul? His individual character had proved an obstacle to his inquiries, even whilst they were strictly physical. A refuted or irritated chemist had suddenly concluded a long correspondence by telling his youthful opponent that he would write to his master and have him flogged. The discipline of a public school, however salutary in other respects, was not favourable to free and fair discussion, and hence Shelley began to address his enquiries anonymously, or rather that he might receive an answer as Philaethes and the like; but even at Eton the postman did not understand Greek, and to prevent miscarriages, therefore, it was necessary to adopt a more familiar name, as John Short or Thomas Long.

“In briefly describing the nature of Shelley’s epistolary contentions, the impression that they were conducted on his part, or considered by him with frivolity, or any unseemly levity, would be most erroneous; his whole frame of mind was grave, earnest, and anxious, and his deportment was reverential, with an edification reaching beyond his age, an age wanting in reverence—an unlearned age—a young age for the lack-learning. Hume permits no object of respect to remain—Locke approaches the most awful speculations with the same indifference as if he were about to handle the properties of triangles; the small deference rendered to the most holy things by the able theologian Paley, is not the least remarkable of his characteristics. Wiser and better men displayed anciently, together with a more profound erudition, a superior and touching solemnity; the meek seriousness of Shelley was redolent of those good old times, before mankind had been despoiled of a main ingredient in the composition of happiness, a well directed veneration.

“Whether such disputations were decorous or profitable, may be perhaps doubtful; there can be no doubt, however, since the sweet gentleness of Shelley was easily and instantly swayed by the mild influences of friendly admonition, that had even the least dignified of his elders suggested the propriety of his pursuing his metaphysical inquiries with less ardour, his obedience would have been prompt and perfect.”

It is to be lamented that all his letters written at this time should have perished, as they would throw light on the speculations of his active and inquiring mind.

Shelley was an indefatigable student, frequently devoting to his books ten or twelve hours of the day, and part of the night. The absorption of his ideas by reading, was become in him a curious phenomenon. He took in seven or eight lines at a glance, and his mind seized the sense with a velocity equal to the twinkling of an eye. Often would a single word enable him at once to comprehend the meaning of the sentence. His memory was prodigious. He with the same fidelity assimilated, to use a medical term for digestion, the ideas acquired by reading and those which he derived from reflection or conversation. In short, he possessed the memory of places, words, things, and figures. Not only did he call up objects at will, but he revived them in the mind, in the same situations, and with the lights and colours in which they had appeared to him at particular moments. He collected not only the gist of the thoughts in the book wherefrom they were taken, but even the disposition of his soul at the time. [Thus, by an unheard-of faculty and privilege, he could retrace the progress and the whole course of his imagination from the most anciently sketched idea, down to its last development. His brain, habituated from earliest youth to the complicated mechanism of human forces, drew from its rich structure a crowd of admirable images, full of reality and freshness, with which it was continually nurtured.] He could throw a veil over his eyes, and find himself in a *camera obscura*, where all the features of a scene were reproduced in a form more pure and perfect than they had been originally presented to his external senses.

“As his love of intellectual pursuits was vehement, and the vigour of his genius almost celestial, so were the purity and sanctity of his life most conspicuous. His food was plain and simple as that of a hermit, with a certain anticipation at this time of a vegetable diet, respecting which he afterwards became an enthusiast in theory, and in practice an irregular votary. With his usual fondness for moving the abstruse and difficult questions of the highest theology, he loved to inquire, whether man can justify, on the ground of reason alone, the practice of taking the life of inferior animals, except in the necessary defence of his life, and of his means of life, the fruits of that field which he had tilled, from violence and spoliation. Not only have considerable sects, he said, denied the right altogether; but those among the tender-hearted and imaginative people of antiquity, who accounted it lawful to kill and eat, appear to have doubted whether they might take away life solely for the use of man alone. They slew their cattle, not simply for human gusto, like the less scrupulous butchers of modern times, but only as a sacrifice for the honour and in the name of the Deity, or rather of those subordinate divinities, to whom as they believed the Supreme Being had assigned the creation and conservation of the visible material world; as an incitement to these pious offerings, they partook of the residue of the victims, of which, without such sanction and sanctification, they would not have presumed to taste. So reverent was the caution of a humane and prudent antiquity. Bread became his chief sustenance; when his regimen attained an austerity that afterwards distinguished it, he could have lived on bread alone, without repining. When he was walking in London, he would suddenly turn into a baker's shop, purchase a supply, and breaking a loaf, he would offer it to his companion. ‘Do you know,’ he said to me one day with some surprise, ‘that such a one does not like bread? Did you ever know a person who disliked bread?’ And he told me that a friend had refused such an offer. I explained to him that the individual in question probably had no objection to bread in a moderate quantity, and with the usual adjuncts, and was only unwilling to devour two or three pounds of dry bread in the street, and at an early hour. Shelley had no such scruples—his pockets were generally well stored with bread. A circle upon the carpet clearly defined by an ample verge of crumbs, often marked the place where he had long sat at his studies—his face nearly in contact with his book. He was near-sighted.”

Shelley frequently exercised his ingenuity in long discussions respecting various questions in logic, and more

frequently indulged in metaphysical inquiries. Mr. H[ogg] and himself read several metaphysical works together in whole or in part, for the first time, and after a previous perusal by one or both of them. The examination of a chapter of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, would induce him at any moment to quit every other pursuit. They read together Hume's *Essays*, and some productions of the Scotch metaphysicians of inferior ability, all with assiduous and friendly altercations, and the latter writers at least with small profit, unless some sparks of knowledge were struck out in the collision of debate. They read also certain popular French works, that treat of man for the most part in a mixed method, metaphysically, morally and politically.

"We must bear in mind, however, that he was an eager, bold, and unwearied disputant, and although the position in which the sceptic and materialist love to entrench themselves, offer no picturesque attractions to the eye of the poet, it is well adapted to defensive warfare, and it is not easy for an ordinary enemy to dislodge him who occupies a post that derives strength from the weakness of the assailant. It has been insinuated that whenever a man of real talent and generous feelings condescends to fight under these colours, he is guilty of a dissimulation which he deems harmless, perhaps even praiseworthy, for the sake of victory in argument. It is not a little curious to observe one whose sanguine temper led him to believe implicitly every assertion, so that it was impossible and incredible, exulting in his philosophical doubts, when, the calmest and most suspicious of analysts, he refused to admit, without strict proof, propositions, that many who are not deficient in metaphysical prudence account obvious and self-evident. The sceptical philosophy had another charm, it partook of the new and wonderful, inasmuch as it called into doubt, and seemed to place in jeopardy, during the joyous hours of disputation, many important practical conclusions. To a soul loving excitement and change, destruction, so it be on a large scale, may sometimes prove hardly less inspiring than creation. The fact of the magician, who by the touch of his rod, could cause the great Pyramid to dissolve into the air, and to vanish from the sight, would be as surprising as the achievement of him,

who by the same rod, could instantly raise a similar mass in any chosen spot. If the destruction of the eternal monument was only apparent, the ocular sophism would be at once harmless and ingenious; so was it with the logomachy of the young and strenuous logician, and his intellectual activity merited praise and reward. There was another reason, moreover, why the sceptical philosophy should be welcome to Shelley,—at that time he was young, and it is generally acceptable to youth. It is adopted as the abiding rule of reason, throughout life, by those who are distinguished by a sterility of soul, a barrenness of invention, a total dearth of fancy, and a scanty stock of learning. Such, in truth, although the warmth of feverish blood, the light burthen of a few years, and the precipitation of experience, may sometimes seem to contradict the assertion, is the state of mind at the commencement of manhood, when the vessel has, as yet, received but a small portion of the cargo of the accumulated wisdom of past ages; when the amount of mental operations that have actually been performed is small, and the materials upon which the imagination can work are insignificant; consequently, the inventions of the young are crude and frigid. Hence the most fertile mind exactly resembles in early youth, the hopeless barrenness of those, who have grown old in vain, as to its actual condition, and it differs only in the unseen capacity for future production. The philosopher who declares that he knows nothing, and that nothing can be known, will readily find followers among the young, for they are sensible that they possess the requisite qualification for entering the school, and are as far advanced in the science of ignorance as their master. A stranger who had chanced to have been present at some of Shelley's disputes, or who knew him only from having read some of the short argumentative essays which he composed as voluntary exercises, would have said, 'Surely the soul of Hume passed by transmigration into the body of that eloquent young man, or rather he represents one of the enthusiastic and animated materialists of the French school, whom revolutionary violence lately intercepted at an early age in his philosophical career.'

"There were times, however, when a visitor who had listened to the glowing discourses delivered with a more intense ardour, would have hailed a young Platonist breathing forth the ideal philosophy, and in his pursuit of the intellectual world, entirely overlooking the material, or noticing it only to condemn it. The tall boy, who is permitted, for the first time, to scare the partridges with his fowling piece, scorns to handle the top or the hoop of his younger brother; thus the man, whose years and studies are mature, slight the feeble as-

pirations after the higher departments of knowledge that were deemed so important during his residence at college. It seems laughable, but it is true, his knowledge of Plato was derived solely from Dacier's translation of a few of the Dialogues, and from an English version of that French translation. Since that time, however, few of his countrymen have read the golden works of that majestic philosopher in the original language, more frequently, and more carefully; and few, if any, with more profit than Shelley. Although the source whence flowed his earliest taste of the divine philosophy was scanty and turbid, the draught was not the less grateful to his lips. Shelley was never tired of reading passages from the dialogues contained in this collection, especially from the *Phædo*, and he was vehemently excited by the striking doctrines which Socrates unfolds, especially by that which teaches, that all our knowledge consists of reminiscences of what we had learnt in a former existence. He often even paced about his room, slowly shook his wild locks, and discoursed in a solemn tone with a mysterious air, speculating concerning our previous condition, and of the nature of our life and occupations in the world, where, according to Plato, we had attained to erudition, and had advanced ourselves in knowledge, so that the most studious and the most inventive, in other words, those who have the best memory, are able to call back a part only, and with much pain, and extreme difficulty, of what was familiar to us."

This doctrine, introduced by Pythagoras, after his travels in India, and derived from the Gymnosophists, was received almost without question by several of the philosophers of Greece; and long before Shelley went to Oxford, had taken deep root in his mind, for he had met with it in Coleridge and introduced it into *The Wander-ing Jew*. That Shelley should have been delighted in finding it unfolded in the *Phædo*, I can easily believe. The metempsychosis is a doctrine that vindicated the justice of the Gods; for, by it, the inequalities of conditions, the comparative misery and happiness of individuals, were reconciled to the mind, such individuals being rewarded or punished in this life for good or evil deeds committed in a former state of existence. The objection, that

we have no memory of that state, is answered by the question, "Does a child of two years old remember what passed when he was a year old?" But it is Shelley's opinion that it is permitted to some gifted persons to have glimpses of the past, and he thus records it in his own person.¹

"I have beheld scenes, with the intimate and unaccountable connection of which with the obscure parts of my own nature, I have been irresistibly impressed. I have beheld a scene that has produced no unusual effect on my thoughts. After a lapse of many years I have dreamed of this scene. It has hung on my memory, it has haunted my thoughts at intervals with the pertinacity of an object connected with human affections. I have visited this scene again. Neither the dream could be dissociated from the landscape, nor the landscape from the dream, nor feelings such as neither singly could have awakened from both. But the most remarkable event of this nature which ever occurred to me, happened at Oxford. I was walking with a friend in the neighbourhood of that city, engaged in earnest and interesting conversation; we suddenly turned a corner of a lane, and the view, which its high banks and hedges had concealed, presented itself. The view consisted of a windmill, standing in one among many pleasing meadows, inclosed with stone walls. The irregular and broken ground between the wall and the road in which we stood, a long low hill behind the windmill, and a grey covering of uniform cloud spread over the evening sky. It was that season when the last leaf had just fallen from the scant and stunted ash. The scene surely was a common one, the season and the hour little calculated to kindle lawless thought. It was a tame and uninteresting assemblage of objects, such as would drive the imagination for refuge in serious and sober talk to the evening fireside and the dessert of winter fruits and wine. The effect which it produced on me was not such as could be expected. I suddenly remembered to have seen the exact scene in some dream of long.—Here I was obliged to leave off, overcome with thrilling horror."

Mrs. Shelley appends to this passage the following

¹ This passage from the fragmentary *Catalogue of the Phenomena of Dreams*, as connecting *Sleeping and Waking* is rather disfigured by Medwin's careless and clumsy treatment: so is Mary's note. Both

can be consulted in her editions of the *Essays* &c. or in mine of the *Prose Works* (vol. ii, pp. 296-7). So can those given a few pages further on with almost as little care in the transfer.

remark: "This fragment was written in 1815. I remember well his coming to me from writing it, pale and agitated, to seek refuge in conversation from the fearful emotions it excited." "No man," she adds, "had such keen sensations as Shelley. His nervous temperament was wound up by the delicacy of his health to an intense degree of sensibility; and while his active mind pondered for ever upon, and drew conclusions from his sensations, his reveries increased their vivacity, till they mingled with and were one with thought, and both became absorbing and tumultuous, even to physical pain."

Balzac relates of Louis Lambert a similar phenomenon to the above:—

"Whilst at school at Blois, during a holiday, we were allowed to go to the chateau of Rochambeau. As soon as we reached the hill, whence we could behold the chateau, and the tortuous valley where the river wound through meadows of graceful slope,—one of those admirable landscapes on which the lively sensations of boyhood, or those of love have impressed such a charm that we can never venture to look on them a second time,—Louis Lambert said to me,—‘I have seen all this last night in dream.’ He recognised the grove of trees under which we were, and the disposition of the foliage, the colour of the water, the turrets of the chateau, the lights and shades, the distances, in fine all the details of the spot which we had then perceived for the first time."

After some interesting conversation, which would occupy too much space here, Balzac makes Louis Lambert say,—“If the landscape did not come to me, which it is absurd to think, then must I have come to it. If I were here whilst I slept, does not this fact constitute a complete separation between my body and inward being? Does it not form a locomotive faculty in the soul, or effects that are equivalent to locomotive? Thus, if the disunion of our two natures could take place during sleep, why could they not equally dissever themselves when awake?” “Is there not

an entire science in this phenomenon?' added he, striking his forehead. 'If it be not the principle of a science, it certainly betrays a singular faculty in man.'"

To return, however, to Shelley and Oxford.

"It is hazardous to speak of his earlier efforts as a Platonist, lest they should be confounded with his subsequent advancement; it is not easy to describe his first introduction to the exalted wisdom of antiquity, without borrowing inadvertently from the knowledge which he afterwards acquired. The cold, ungenial, foggy atmosphere of northern metaphysics was less suited to the ardent temperament of his soul than the warm, vivifying climate of the southern and eastern philosophy. His genius expanded under the benign influence of the latter, and he derived copious instruction from a luminous system that is only dark through excess of brightness, and seems obscure to vulgar vision through its extreme radiance."

On this subject I shall have hereafter much to say. Nevertheless, for the present I will repeat, that "in argument, and to argue on all questions was his dominant passion. He usually adopted the scheme of the Sceptics; partly because it was more popular, and is more generally understood. The disputant who would use Plato as a text-book in this age, would reduce his opponents to a small number indeed." It was in this spirit, that, in conjunction with his friend (for it was the production of both), in their everyday studies they made up a little book entitled, *The Necessity of Atheism*, and had it printed, I believe in London—certainly not at Oxford. This little pamphlet was never offered for sale. It was not addressed to an ordinary reader, but to the metaphysical alone; and it was so short, that it was only designed to point out the line of argument. It was, in truth, a general issue, a compendious denial of every allegation in order to put the whole case in proof. It was a formal mode of saying,—"You affirm so and so,—then prove it." And thus was

it understood by his more candid and intelligent correspondents. As it was shorter, so was it plainer, and perhaps, in order to provoke discussion, a little bolder than Hume's *Essays*—a book which occupies a conspicuous place in the library of every student. The doctrine, if not deserving the name, was precisely similar—the necessary and inevitable consequence of Locke's philosophy, and the theory, that all knowledge is from without.

I will not admit your conclusions, his opponent might answer.—Then you must deny those of Hume.—I deny them.—But you must deny those of Locke also; and we will go back together to Plato. Such was the usual course of argument. Sometimes, however, he rested on mere denial, holding his adversary to strict proof, and deriving strength from his weakness. But those who are anxious to see this syllabus, may find it *totidem verbis* in the notes to *Queen Mab*.¹

This syllabus he sent to me among many others, and circulated it largely among the heads of colleges, and professors of the university, forwarding copies it is said to several of the bishops. The author of *The Opium Eater*² says that Shelley put his name to the pamphlet, and the name of his college. The publication was anonymous; but the secret (scarcely made a secret) of the authorship soon transpired. I wish I could also confirm Mr. De Quincey's observation, that Shelley had but just entered his sixteenth

¹ The principal errors in this account of *The Necessity of Atheism* (Worthing; Printed by E. & W. Phillips) are the statements that it was not offered for sale and that it will be found *totidem verbis* in the notes to *Queen Mab*. It certainly was offered for sale by Munday & Slatter, at their shop in Oxford, and advertized for sale in the *Oxford*

University and City Herald of the 9th of February 1811; and the *Queen Mab* version varies considerably in detail from the tract. Full particulars of the episode are given in vol. i of Shelley's *Prose Works* (1880) and in Part I. of my uncompleted work *The Shelley Library, an Essay in Bibliography* (1886).

² *Tait's Magazine*, January 1846.

year ; he was in his nineteenth. Still, however, Shelley was a thoughtless boy at this era, and not a man. The promulgation of this syllabus was a reckless—a mad act.

The consequence might be anticipated.

“It was a fine spring morning, on Lady-day, in the year 1811, when,” says Mr. H[ogg] “I went to Shelley’s rooms; he was absent; but before I had collected our books, he rushed in. He was terribly agitated.* I anxiously enquired what had happened: ‘I am expelled!’ he said, as soon as he had recovered himself a little,—‘I am expelled! I was sent for suddenly, a few minutes ago,—I went to the common room, where I found our master and two or three of his fellows. The master produced a copy of the little syllabus, and asked me if I was the author of it; he spoke in a rude, abrupt, and insolent tone; I begged to be informed for what purpose they put the question,—no answer was given, but the master loudly and angrily repeated, ‘Are you the author of this book?’ ‘If I can judge from your manner,’ I said, ‘you are resolved to punish me, if I should acknowledge that it is my work. If you can prove that it is, produce your evidence; it is neither just nor lawful to interrogate me in such a case, and for such a purpose. Such proceedings would become a Court of Inquisitors; but not free men in a free country.’ ‘Do you choose to deny that this is your composition?’ the master reiterated in the same rude and angry voice.

“Shelley complained much of his violent and ungentlemanlike deportment, saying, ‘I have experienced tyranny and injustice

* A pendant to this inquisitorial conduct, may be found in the case of Ronge, the new Reformer, who wrote an article in the *Annales de la Patrie*, proclaiming the most ardent sympathy for liberty; and an admiration without bounds for the French revolution. Ronge was summoned by a letter of the Vicar-General of Silesia, to declare whether or not he was the author of the paper in question. Throwing himself on the protection of Prussian laws, that interdict the prosecution of an anonymous author,—at least, where his writings contain no personal scandal, or attacks on the state that may be dangerous,—the curate of Grolkan made this laconic reply, “that his conscience enjoined him silence.” Yet without any proof or trial, Ronge was suspended, and condemned to imprisonment. Ronge who was once looked up to as a new Luther in Germany has fallen into utter contempt. His doctrines are almost forgotten.

before, and I well know what vulgar virulence is, but I never met with such unworthy treatment. I told him calmly, but firmly, that I was determined not to answer any questions respecting the book on the table—he immediately repeated his demand; I persisted in my refusal, and he said, furiously, ‘Then you are expelled, and I desire that you will quit the college to-morrow morning at the latest.’

“‘One of the fellows took up two papers, and handed me one of them,—here it is’—he produced a regular sentence of expulsion drawn up in due form, under the seal of the college.

“Shelley was full of spirit and courage, frank and fearless, but he was likewise shy, unassuming, and eminently sensitive; I have been with him on many trying occasions of his after life, but I never saw him so deeply shocked and so cruelly agitated as on this occasion. A nice sense of honour shrinks from the most distant touch of disgrace—even from the insults of those men whose contumely can bring no shame. He sat on the sofa, repeating with convulsive vehemence the word ‘Expelled! Expelled!’ his head shaking with emotion, his whole frame quivering.”

Speaking of this expulsion, it is to be regretted that he had a tutor of whom Mr. H[ogg] does not give a very flattering picture, and whom he accuses of denouncing Shelley. I had once a conversation with a German Professor, who expressed his astonishment at this laconic fiat, and said, that had Shelley promulgated this Syllabus at any of their universities, he would have found Divines enough to have entered the lists with him, adding, that had not the young collegian been convinced, he would not have drawn from what he deemed intolerance and persecution, an obstinate adherence to his errors, from a belief that his logic was unanswerable. A manifest of this sort from a man whose opinions are formed, and who gives them the authority of a name, may to a certain point awaken the attention of a government partly founded on respect for the established religion.—But not so when a Student overloaded with an undigested and unwholesome erudition, seduced by the spurious and brilliant

Novelty of some prohibited¹ Theories, sets himself up in the face of Ages, of History, and of God, to abjure and deny on the *ipse dixits* of others, all that is believed and taught to be sacred—was it just was it prudent to treat as serious these idle speculations of a beardless philosopher? To my mind a dignified silence, an indulgent disdain, or at most a contemptuous raillery would have best become these crudities, the most cutting and surest of chastisements which he could have received.

It might be supposed that it was not without some reluctance, that the master and fellows of University College passed against Shelley this stern decree (which Mr. Hogg designates as monstrous and illegal), not only on account of his youth and distinguished talents, promising to reflect credit on the college; but because, as I have said, his father had been a member of it, his ancestors its benefactors. I know not if these considerations had any weight with the conclave, but it appears that Shelley was by no means in good odour with the authorities of the college, from the side he took in the election of Lord Grenville, as chancellor, against his competitor, a member of University College. Shelley, by his family and connexions, as well as disposition, was attached to the successful party, in common with the whole body of undergraduates, one and all, in behalf of the scholar and liberal statesman. Plain and loud was the avowal of his sentiments, nor were they confined to words, for he published, I think in the *Morning Chronicle*, under the pseudo signature of “A Master of Arts of Oxford,” a letter advocating the claims of Lord Grenville,

¹ This passage is one of those manuscript additions with which Medwin's margin is crammed: the word written here is, literally, *pro-*

hibited; but we may assume that the old gentleman meant *prohibited* and knew how to spell that word.

which, perhaps, might have been detected as his, by the heads of the college. It was a well-written paper, and calculated to produce some effect; and as he expressed himself eminently delighted at the issue of the contest,—“at that wherewith his superiors were offended, he was regarded from the beginning with a jealous eye.” Such at least are the impressions of his friend.

The next morning at eight o'clock, Shelley and Mr. H[ogg], who had been involved in the same fate, set out together for London on the top of the coach; and with his final departure from the university, the reminiscences of his life at Oxford terminate.¹

The narration of the injurious effects of this cruel, precipitate, unjust, and illegal expulsion, upon the entire course of his subsequent life, will not be wanting in interest or instruction; of a period, when the scene was changed from the quiet seclusion of academic groves and gardens, and the calm valley of the silvery Isis, to the stormy ocean of that vast and shoreless world, and to the utmost violence of which, he was, at an early age, suddenly and unnaturally abandoned.

I remember, as if it occurred yesterday, his knocking

¹ Other accounts of the expulsion are given in Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i, pp. 123-5, in a long foot-note in which I think my friend the family biographer takes too much as a certainty my suggestion that W. H. Merle, the author of *Costanza, a Poem* (London, 1828), and *Odds and Ends in Prose and Verse* (London, 1831), was the writer of *A Newspaper Editor's reminiscences*, published in *Fraser's Magazine* for June 1841. Mr. Roger Ingpen records (*Letters of Shelley*, vol. i, p. 7) that Dr. Garnett held the Newspaper Editor to have been Gibbon Neale. I do not find

it easy to reject Merle on the strength of this opinion; but, as the Newspaper Editor is among those who contribute to the expulsion chronicles, it may be well to offer what further knowledge of Merle has come to the surface since Professor Dowden dealt with the subject. In a collection of Shelley's Letters which I had intended to publish if Mr. Ingpen had not saved me the labour are two to Graham about Merle. One Mr. Ingpen has published; but the other I have not seen in print. It seems best to add both to Medwin's appendix of early letters, q. v.

at my door in Garden Court, in the Temple, at four o'clock in the morning, the second day after his expulsion. I think I hear his cracked voice, with his well-known pipe,—“Medwin, let me in, I am expelled;” here followed a sort of loud, half-hysterical laugh, and a repetition of the words—“I am expelled,” with the addition of, “for Atheism.” Though greatly shocked, I was not much surprised at the news, having been led to augur such a close to his collegiate career, from the Syllabus and the Posthumous Works of Peg Nicholson, which he had sent me. My apprehensions, too, of the consequences of this unhappy event, from my knowledge of Sir Timothy’s character, were soon confirmed; nor was his partner in misfortune doomed to a milder fate. Their fathers refused to receive them under their roofs. Like the old men in Terence, they compared notes, and hardened each other’s hearts. This unmitigable hatred was continued down to the deaths of both. One had not the power of carrying his worldly resentment beyond the grave, but the other not only never forgave, or I believe ever would see his eldest son (for such he was, and presumptive heir to a large fortune), but cut him off, speaking after the manner of the Roman law, with a shilling.

During Shelley’s ostracism, he and his friend took a lodging together, where I visited them, living as best they could. Good arises out of evil. Both owe, perhaps, to this expulsion, their celebrity; one has risen to an eminence as a lawyer,¹ which he might never have attained,

¹ Trelawny (*Letters*, 1910, p. 232) describes him as “a soured and grossly ill-used able man.” As the boy said, “the Ibis is safest in the middle” (*In medio tutissimus ibis*). Hogg was a revising barrister and was beloved in the family founded

by him and Edward Williams’s Jane. His writings, including a large number of unpublished, almost unknown, letters to his friend and colleague in the law Mr. B. Hoskyns Abrahall, are of a manly and original tone; but not of great

and the other has made himself a name which will go down to posterity with those of Milton and Byron.

At this time Shelley was ever in a dreamy state, and he told me he was in the habit of noting down his dreams. The first day, he said, they amounted to a page, the next to two, the third to several, till at last they constituted the greater part of his existence; realising Calderon's *Sueño e Sueño*. One morning he told me he was satisfied of the existence of two sorts of dreams, the Phrenic and the Psychic; and that he had witnessed a singular phenomenon, proving that the mind and the soul were separate and different entities—that it had more than once happened to him to have a dream, which the mind was pleasantly and actively developing; in the midst of which, it was broken off by a dream within a dream—a dream of the soul, to which the mind was not privy; but that from the effect it produced—the start of horror with which he waked, must have been terrific. It is no wonder that, making a pursuit of dreams, he should have left some as

general interest except when he is dealing with Shelley. It is a pity we have not the other two projected volumes of his Life. In the last of over a hundred letters to Mr. Abrahall (*penes me*) is a pleasant passage showing that, as late as January 1862, he still held to the intention of completing his Life of Shelley, although the official volume of *Shelley Memorials* had then been issued by Lady Shelley in default of Hogg's second half between two and three years. "I shall be glad to hear, whenever you have leisure to write, how you get on in your new and higher sphere. For myself, I am commonly plagued, more or less, with gout; nevertheless, I am contented and happy. Old men do not love, they doat, and

such are my feelings towards the Greek Classics; a doating fondness, and to them I devote much of my time, particularly to the Poets. However, peace be with the Poets; I must complete the Life of a Poet; and all the more, because, as I am told, I have been abused roundly by the Quarterly, by the *Hind* quarterly I should say, for so is it commonly called, either with a peculiar significancy, or as expressing generally contempt.—The negative power of reviews is very great; praise passes for a publisher's paid for puff, but censure, angry censure, compels the reader to infer, that the condemned work must contain something to repay curiosity: I perceive this effect very sensibly."

a catalogue of the phenomena of dreams, as connecting sleeping and waking.

"I distinctly remember," he says, "dreaming several times, between the intervals of two or three years, the same precise dream. It was not so much what is ordinarily called a dream : The single image, unconnected with all other images, of a youth who was educated at the same school with myself, presented itself in sleep. Even now, after a lapse of many years, I can never hear the name of this youth, without the three places where I dreamed of him presenting themselves distinctly to my mind." And again, "in dreams, images acquire associations peculiar to dreaming ; so that the idea of a particular house, when it occurs a second time in dreams, will have relation with the idea of the same house in the first time, of a nature entirely different from that which the house excites when seen or thought of in relation to waking ideas."

His systematising of dreams, and encouraging, if I may so say, the habit of dreaming, by this journal, which he then kept, revived in him his old somnambulism. As an instance of this, being in Leicester Square one morning at five o'clock, I was attracted by a group of boys collected round a well-dressed person lying near the rails. On coming up to them, my curiosity being excited, I descried Shelley, who had unconsciously spent a part of the night *sub dio*. He could give me no account of how he got there.

We took during the spring frequent walks in the Parks, and on the banks of the Serpentine. He was fond of that classical recreation, as it appears by a fragment from some comic drama of Æschylus, of making "ducks and drakes," counting with the utmost glee the number of

bounds, as the flat stones flew skimming over the surface of the water; nor was he less delighted with floating down the wind paper boats, in the constructing of which habit had given him a wonderful skill. He took as great interest in the sailing of his frail vessels as a ship-builder may do in that of his vessels—and when one escaped the dangers of the winds and waves, and reached in safety the opposite shore, he would run round to hail the safe termination of its voyage. Mr. H[ogg] gives a very pleasant account of Shelley's fondness for this sort of navigation, and on one occasion, wearied with standing shivering on the bank of the canal, said, "Shelley, there is no use in talking to you, you are the Demiurgus of Plato.' He instantly caught up the whole flotilla he was preparing, and bounding homewards with mighty strides, laughed aloud,—laughed like a giant, as he used to say."

Singular contrast to the profound speculations in which he was engaged. He now, rankling with the sense of wrong, and hardened by persecution, and the belief that the logic of his Syllabus had been unrespected because it could not be shaken, applied himself more closely than ever to that Sceptical philosophy, which he had begun to discard for Plato, and would, but for his expulsion, have soon entirely abandoned. He reverted to his *Queen Mab*,¹ commenced a year and a half before, and converted what was a mere imaginative poem into a systematic attack on the institutions of society. He not only corrected the versification with great care, but more than doubled its length, and appended to the text the Notes, which were at that time scarcely, if at all begun, even if they were

¹ For these details about *Queen Mab* Medwin is no very credible authority: he says himself later on

(p. 93) that Shelley never showed him a line of the poem.

contemplated. The intolerance of the members of a religion, which should be that of love and charity and long-suffering, in his own case, made him throw the odium on the creed itself; and he argues that it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission, and adds, that a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than that of his aggressor, who daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator.

Like a man dominated by a fixed idea, Shelley's reading, in the concoction of these notes, was one-sided. In addition to Hume's *Essays*,* which were his hand-book,—and I remember ridiculing the chapter entitled a Sceptical Solution of Sceptical Doubts, asking him what could be made of a doubtful solution of doubtful doubts?—he dug out of the British Museum, Lucretius, Pliny the Elder, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, *Le Système du Monde* of Laplace, “*Les Rapports de Cabanis*”, the Letters of Bailly to Voltaire, the Ethic Treatises of Bacon, the Theology of Spinoza, Condorcet, Cuvier, Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, Godwin's *Political Justice* and *Enquirer*, and many other French and English works, to suit his purpose,

* The dilemma in which Hume placed Philosophy delighted him. He at that time thought the sceptical mode of reasoning unanswerable. Berkeley denied the existence of matter, or rather of the substratum of matter. Hume, going deeper, endeavoured to show mind a figment. Berkeley says Hume professes in his title-page to have composed his book against sceptics as well as Atheists and Freethinkers; but all his arguments, though otherwise intended, are in reality sceptical, as appears from this, that they admit of no answer, and produce no conviction.

and in the course of the year printed that extraordinarily talented poem.

Intimate and confidential as we were, Shelley never showed me a line of *Queen Mab*, which may, in some degree, be accounted for by his knowing that our opinions on very many of the theories, or rather hypotheses, contained in that book, were as wide apart as the poles, and that he was sensible that I should have strongly objected to his disseminating them. Not that, although he did print, he ever published *Queen Mab*—confining himself to sending copies of it to many of the writers of the day; but falling into the hands of a piratical bookseller, it soon got circulation from his reprint. It is certain that in its present form, Shelley would never have admitted it into a collection of his works, and the modification of some of his opinions—though, in the main, he never changed the more important ones—would have prevented him from putting forth those crude speculations of his boyish days. That such was the case, excuse the anachronism, we may judge from a letter addressed to the editor of *The Examiner*, bearing date June 22nd, 1821, wherein he says:

“Having heard that a poem entitled *Queen Mab* has been surreptitiously published in London, and that legal proceedings have been instituted against the publisher, I request the favour of your insertion of the following explanation of the affair as it relates to me:—

“A poem, entitled *Queen Mab*, was written by me at the age of eighteen, I dare say in a sufficiently intemperate spirit, but even then was not intended for publication, and a few copies only were struck off to be distributed among my personal friends. I have not seen this production for several years. *I doubt not that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; that in all that concerns moral and political speculations, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature.*

I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression, and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear *it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom*. I have directed my solicitor to apply for an injunction to restrain the sale, but after the precedent of Mr. Southey's *Wat Tyler*—a poem written, I believe, at the same age, and with the same unreflecting enthusiasm—with little hope of success."

And again in a letter to Mr. Gisborne dated June 16th, 1821, he says after some deprecating remarks on the Notes,

"I have given orders because *I wish to protest against all the bad poetry in it* that the publication has been made against my desire, and have directed my attorney to apply to Chancery for an injunction which he will not get."

I may here remark, that it is singular and unaccountable that the editor of *The Examiner* should not have complied with Shelley's wishes in giving publicity to this letter, which could not but have proved beneficial to Shelley. He had so completely forgotten this poem of his youth, that in a letter to Mr. Horace Smith, he says, "If you happen to have [brought] a copy of Clarke's edition of *Queen Mab* for me, I should like [very well] to see it. I hardly know what this poem may be about. *I fear it is rather rough*." This letter bears date Sept. 14th, 1821.

I have marked in italics the passages in these extracts that show his change of opinions—his regret of the publication as a literary composition, and his fear of its tendency, although perhaps Mrs. Shelley is right in including *Queen Mab* among her lamented husband's works, from its wide dissemination, and her utter inability to suppress it. Everything is valuable that came from his pen, inasmuch as it assists to show the progress of his master-mind, the elements on which the superstructure of his philosophy was reared.

I was acquainted with Sir Something Lawrence, a

Knight of Malta, whom I met first at Paris, and afterwards in London. He had purchased his knighthood in the French metropolis, where an office was opened for the sale of these honours. Nobility of origin was held as an indispensable qualification for such titles; but it would seem that it was not very rigorously enforced, for in the Knight's case the proofs were defective on the paternal side, and it was with a consciousness of this fact that he wrote a sort of half-historical romance, a miserable Utopia in four volumes entitled the *History of the Nairs*, in which he endeavours to establish the supremacy of woman. He had also published a small volume entitled *The Nobility of the English Gentry* in which he endeavours to prove that an English Esquire is as noble as a German Baron, with his 50 quarters, or a French Vicomte, or an Italian Marquese. It was a work that not only flattered his own vanity but *was* in high esteem among our title loving compatriots, and is probably still indexed in Galignani's Catalogues. Ours is the only nation at the present day that twaddles over these antiquated and outworn lucubrations — on which the late French and German revolutions have set their Seal in those Countries.

When I saw him in town, he was always wading at the British Museum, in the stagnant pool of genealogy, endeavouring in spite of his system, to discover the flaw in his escutcheon a mistake, and when he failed in so doing, used to contend that the only real nobility was in the female line. To what absurdity will not an *idée fixe* impart conviction, or the semblance of conviction! ¹

¹ We must not take at Medwin's valuation either James Lawrence or his numerous remarkable works — often more remarkable than decent or profitable. *The Empire*

of the Nairs; | or, the | Rights of Women. | An | Utopian Romance, | In Twelve Books. | By James Lawrence, | author of | "The Bosom Friend, "Love, an Allegory," | etc. . .

After the publication of this strange History of the Nairs, he sent it with a letter to Shelley, referring him to a note in *Queen Mab* hostile to matrimony, and taxing him with apostacy from his principles, in having twice entered that state. This epistle produced an answer ;¹ I

In four volumes . . . | London . . . | Hookham . . . | 1811, is by no means unreadable; and, though now somewhat rare, can be consulted by the curious and enterprising in English, French, or German.

¹ There appears to be no doubt that Shelley wrote to Lawrence; but Medwin has made a characteristic hash of the episode, and, I think, gives the snatch from Shelley's letter quite inaccurately and without understanding it. Lawrence corrected Medwin to some extent in 1834, the anecdote in the text having appeared first in *The Athenæum* in 1832 and secondly in *The Shelley Papers* as separately printed in 1833. He denied sending the *Nairs* to the youth. He had published as early as 1802 a poem called *Love: An Allegory*; Shelley had tried to get a copy through Hookham; and Hookham borrowed Lawrence's own last remaining copy from him to lend to Shelley, who had already read the *Nairs* before Lawrence was aware of the young poet's existence. Having then read *Love*, Shelley wrote to thank Lawrence; and the letter (which may be seen *in extenso* in the Prose Works, 1880) contains the following passage: "If there is any enormous and desolating crime, of which I should shudder to be accused, it is seduction. I need not say how much I admire 'Love'; and little as a British public seems to appreciate its merit, in never permitting it to emerge from a first edition, it is with satisfaction I find, that justice has conceded abroad what bigotry has denied at home." This was what Shelley wrote from Lynmouth in 1812. In 1828 Lawrence re-

printed *Love* in a miscellany in two small volumes called *The Etonian out of Bounds*; | or | *Poetry and Prose*. | By Sir James Lawrence . . . | London: | . . . Hunt and Clarke, | No. 4 York Street, Covent Garden |; but I can find nothing about Shelley in that issue. In 1834, however, there was evidently a remainder of *The Etonian out of Bounds*; and then Lawrence be-thought him to push it along on the backs of Shelley and Goethe, printed an Appendix Extraordinary for each volume, and republished the whole, the old sheets and the new, with fresh title-pages and engraved frontispieces. It was thus and then that Shelley's letter was published, in unsuitable company enough. *The Etonian out of Bounds*; | or *The Philosophy of the Boudoir*, | to which are annexed | several hundred new verses, | *Tales of Gallantry, Satires, Epigrams, Songs, Wild Oats, Forbidden Fruit, Anecdotes, of Goethe and Shelley, And a Variety of Literary and Philosophic Speculations*, | By James de Laurence, | author of *The Empire of the Nairs*, etc. . . . London . . . | Brooks . . . : | 1834, swollen by its two appendices paged in roman numerals, form in all 450 pages. The book is a good deal more various than the *Nairs* and far more brilliant than proper. It contains very little Shelley to dilute its flood of "wild oats" and "forbidden fruit"; and one regrets that no gentleman's Shelley Library is complete without it. Observe that Lawrence (with a *w*) has become de Laurence (with a *u*); but take Medwin's bit of scandal *cum grano salis*. Although a lewd writer at times, Lawrence had

have not the whole of it, though it was published by Lawrence. Shelley says there, "I abhor seduction as much as I adore love; and if I have conformed to the uses of the world on the score of matrimony, it is" (the argument is borrowed, by the bye, from Godwin, in his *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft*,) "that disgrace always attaches to the weaker side."

It may be here remarked that the second Mrs. Shelley (when *Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin*) fully coalesced in opinion with Shelley on the score of marriage. Her objections to it were embodied in a correspondence which past between them in the early stage of their acquaintance. This correspondence would be very curious, but it is not likely that the World will see the letters as Lady Blessington told me they were purchased by Mrs. Shelley for £40 of George Gordon Byron into whose hands they happened to fall, and who had intended to publish them in his promised life of his father. She seems indeed after her marriage to have looked back to their illicit intercourse with complacency for in his Dedication to her of *The Revolt of Islam* Shelley says—

How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
In thy young wisdom, when the *mortal chain*
Of custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
And walked as free as light the clouds' among:—

A decided anti-matrimonialist, the historian of the Nairs was by no means convinced by Shelley's argument. One evening he persuaded me to accompany him to the Owenite chapel, in Charlotte-street. In the ante-room, I observed a man at a table, on which were laid for sale, among many works on a small scale, this *History of the*

genuinely on the brain the subject of descent through the female line; and his pictorial illustration of his theory and of one of his publications, a print called *The Navel String*, approaches the verge of lunacy.

Nairs, and *Queen Mab*, and after the discourse by Owen—a sort of doctrinal rather than moral essay, in which he promised his disciples a millennium of roast beef and fowls, and three or four days' recreation out of the seven, equal division of property, and an universality of knowledge by education,—we had an interview with the lecturer and reformer, whom I had met some years before at the house of a Northumberland lady. On finding that I was connected with Shelley, he made a long panegyric on him, and taking up one of the *Queen Mabs* from the table, read, premising that it was the basis of one of his chief tenets, the following passage :

“How long ought the sexual connection to last? What law ought to specify the extent of the grievance that should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love one another. Any law that should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection, would be a most intolerable tyranny, and most unworthy of toleration.”

If Lord Melbourne did not hold similar opinions, he at least thought there was no harm in encouraging them, by presenting Mr. Owen to our then virgin Queen. The question is, whether, in the present state of society, and with the want of education that characterises the sect of which Mr. Owen is the founder, the Socialists, their tenets are, or are not pregnant with danger. This *philanthropist*, however, certainly is sincere in believing the contrary; and up to this time experience seems to have confirmed his belief. He has spent his life, and expended his fortune in inculcating them; and a more thoroughly amiable and moral man does not exist.

“He has had but one object in both hemispheres,” (to use the words of Frederica Bremer,) “to help the mass of mankind to food and raiment, in order that the mass may make provision for their mental improvement; for when the necessary wants are satisfied, man turns to those

of a more general and exalted kind. Hence, when the great daywork of the earth is done with men, the Sabbath will begin, in which a generation of tranquil worshippers will spread over the earth, no longer striving after perishable treasures, but seeking those which are eternal; a people whose whole life will be devoted to the improvement of their mental powers, and to the worship of the Creator in spirit and in truth. Then the day will arrive in which the angels will say, 'Peace upon Earth!!!'

This edition of *Queen Mab*, that has led to the above quotation, bore the name of Brooks as publisher. It contains a beautiful frontispiece illustrative of the death of Ianthe, and as a motto, the well-known line from some Greek dramatist—probably Æschylus—which may be rendered:

90677

Give me whereon to stand, I'll move the earth.¹

Brooks did, or does, live in Oxford Street, and I paid him more than one visit. He had a correspondent at Marlow, who knew Shelley, but whose name I have forgotten, from whom he obtained a copy of *Queen Mab*, which, like *The Wandering Jew*, had probably been left by Shelley's inadvertence in his abode there. This copy was exceedingly interlined, very much curtailed and modified, as by a specimen given in a fragment entitled *The Demon of the World*, appended to *Alastor*; and what is still more important and worthy of remark, with the Notes torn out. The copy had been revised with great care, and as though Shelley had an intention at the time of bringing out a new edition, an idea which his neglect of his labour

¹ The remark on the Charles Landseer's vignette of *Queen Mab* summoning the soul of Ianthe is not undeserved; but John Brooks, who published the handsome 8vo containing the print in 1829, did so with a full acknowledgment repeated from Shelley's own title-page of 1813 that the "Greek dra-

matist—probably Æschylus"—was in truth Archimedes. It was a curious freak of Medwin's to render in blank verse the immortal scientific prose of the *Δὸς ποῦ στῶ* boast. Is this the unhumorous biographer's one recorded joke? By the by, the 1813 title-page reads *κοσμον* instead of *την γην*.

shows he soon abandoned. This emendated work is a great curiosity, and has scattered about the pages rude pen-and-ink drawings of the most fantastic kind, proving the abstraction of his mind during this pursuit. It was a comment that led me to many speculations, suggesting a deep sense of the obloquy of which he had made himself the victim, and betokening a fluctuation of purpose, a hesitation and doubt of himself and of the truth or policy of his theories. That Mr. Brooks (he was the publisher if not the printer of the Owenites) did not make use of the *refaccimenti* or *pentimente* in his numerous reprints of *Queen Mab*, may easily be conceived, for these very alterations were the only objectionable parts to him, and he would have thought it a sacrilege to have struck out a word of the original text, much less the notes. *Queen Mab* is indeed the gospel of the sect, and one of them told me, that he had found a passage in Scripture, that unquestionably applied to Shelley, and that the word *Shiloh* was pronounced in the Hebrew precisely in the same manner as his name.

It is much to be desired that Mrs. Shelley should have endeavoured to obtain this *Queen Mab* of Mr. Brooks. I have no doubt that he would estimate it at a price far beyond my means, nor have I made any overtures to him for the purchase, invaluable as its acquisition would be to me at this moment.

In the autumn, the rage of Shelley's father having somewhat cooled down, he was received at home, but the reconciliation was hollow and insincere. Sir Timothy, who, proud of his son's talents, had looked forward to his acquiring high academical distinctions, felt deeply, not so much the disgrace of the expulsion, as an apprehension that the circumstance might tend hereafter to affect the

brilliant worldly career he had etched out for his heir, marring his prospect of filling the seat in parliament which he then occupied, and intended one day to resign in favour of Percy Bysshe. But it is doubtful if Shelley would, with all his eloquence, have made a politician. He shrunk with an unconquerable dislike from political articles; he never could be induced to read one. The Duke of Norfolk, who was a friend of his father, and to whom his grandfather as I have said owed his title, often engaged him, when dining, as he occasionally did, in St. James's Square, to turn his thoughts towards politics. —“You cannot direct your attention too early to them,” said the Duke. “They are the proper career of a young man of ability and of your station in life. That career is most advantageous, because it is a monopoly. A little success in that line goes far, since the number of competitors is limited, and of those who are admitted to the contest, the greater part are wholly devoid of talent, or too indolent to exert themselves. So many are excluded, that of the few who are permitted to enter, it is difficult to find any that are not utterly unfit for the ordinary service of the state. It is not so in the church; it is not so at the bar. There all may offer themselves. In letters your chance of success is still worse—there none can win gold, and all may try to gain reputation—it is a struggle for glory, the competition is infinite;—there are no bounds;—that is a spacious field indeed, a sea without a shore.”

This holding up of politics as the *το καλον*, was natural in one, who had renounced and recanted his faith for political power. I was present at a great dinner of Whigs, at Norfolk House where one of them, an M. P., speaking of the nominees of election committees, who act as

advocates on the side of their nominators, though they take the same oath as the other members of the committee, and his saying how easy it was for a man determined to *believe*, bending his mind to believe any thing, *alias*, making up his mind beforehand how he should vote. Such casuistry would have been lost on Shelley, to whom I detailed these sentiments, which he highly reprobated. The Duke of Norfolk talked to him many times, in order to convert him to politics, but in vain.

Shelley used to say that he had heard people talk politics by the hour, and how he hated it and them. He carried this aversion through life, and never have I seen him read a newspaper, incredible as it may appear to those who pass half their lives in this occupation.

Mr. Hogg remarks, that,

“had he resolved to enter the career of politics, it is possible that habit would have reconciled him to many things which at first seemed repugnant to his nature ; it is possible that his unwearied industry, his remarkable talents, and vast energy, would have led to renown in that line as well as any other, but it is most probable that his parliamentary success would have been but moderate ; but he struck out a path for himself, by which boldly following his own course, greatly as it deviated from that prescribed to him, he became more illustrious than he would have been had he steadily pursued the beaten track. His memory will be green when the herd of every-day politicians are forgotten. Ordinary rules may guide ordinary men, but the orbit of the child of genius is especially eccentric.”

Sir Timothy was a man entertaining high notions of genitorial rights, but of a very capricious temper ; at one moment too indulgent, at another tyrannically severe to his children. He was subject to the gout, and during its paroxysms, it was almost dangerous to approach him, and he would often throw the first thing that came to hand at

their heads. Shelley seems to allude to him when he says,—

* I'll tell the[e] truth, he was a man,
Hard, selfish, loving only gold—
Yet full of guile; his *pale* eyes ran
With tears which each some falsehood told,
And oft his smooth and bridled tongue
Would give the lie to his flushing cheek.

He was a tyrant to the weak,
On whom his vengeance he would wreak,
For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,
From many a stranger's eye would dart,
And on his memory cling, and follow
His soul to its home so cold and hollow.
He was a tyrant to the weak!
And *we* were *such*, alas the day!
Oft when his [*sic* for *my*] little ones at play,
Were in youth's natural lightness gay,
Or if they listened to some tale
Of travellers, or of fairy land,
When the light from the woodfire's dying brand
Flushed on their faces, and they heard,
Or thought they heard, upon the stair
His footsteps, the suspended word
Died on their lips—so each grew pale.¹

* *Rosalind and Helen*.—Page 208.

¹ This is not very much garbled; but in the last four lines *Flushed* should be *Flashed*, *footsteps* should be *footstep*; and the last line really reads—

Died on my lips; we all grew pale:

which would not have suited the historian's purpose. But even from such an arch-sloven as Medwin one may with due submission get an occasional lesson. The almost unique exactness of his reference to *Rosalind and Helen*, his "Page 208," awakes speculation. The *Editio princeps* (London, Ollier, 1819) has but 100 pages, all told. Hence

we must search Mary for the text of the quotation, and so ascertain from what edition Medwin conveyed her notes &c. Page 208 in the double-column royal 8vo is his source in this case, and not the earliest issue of this, which was Mary's second collected edition of 1839. In her first and second collected editions the first line of the passage reads, with the *princeps*, *I'll tell thee truth*; but in the repetition of that sentence in the next paragraph she reads, flatly, and against the *princeps*, *I'll tell the truth*. In reprinting the royal 8vo from the stereotyped plates, the two professions of truth-

Talent is said to be in some degree hereditary, and I have often heard it questioned from whom Shelley derived his genius—undoubtedly not from his father, who was so deficient that he never addressed a public meeting without committing some *contresens*, and could not in his legislative capacity have made an observation that would not have been accompanied by a laugh at “the country gentleman.” His mother was, to use the words of a popular writer, “if not a literary, an intellectual woman, that is, in a certain sense a clever woman, and though of all persons most unpoetical, was possessed of strong masculine sense, a keen observation of character, which if it had had a wider field, might have made her a Madame de Sévigné, or a Lady Wortley Montague, for she wrote admirable letters; but judging of men and things by the narrow circle in which she moved, she took a narrow and cramped view of both, and was as little capable of understanding Shelley, as a peasant would be of comprehending Berkeley.”

Every man of talent, full of new ideas, and dominated by a system, as he was, has his peculiar idiotisms; the more expansive his genius, the more startling are the eccentricities that constitute the different degrees of his originality. “*En Province un original passe pour un*

telling were assimilated, not by correcting the second but by degrading the first. The second *e* in *thee* was cut off the plate, and a gap left,—a cheaper operation than plugging-in a whole line, or even half a line, to establish the harmony ordained by the *princeps*. This is one of the agreeable surprises that await one disposed to continue a job for thirty or forty years. I thought I had made an exhaustive comparison between Shelley's and Mary's editions; and now, when I

call up Medwin, he tells me I did not. It is strange that the dead sloven and not one of the several living men of repute who have followed me in editing Shelley, has brought about this impeachment of my industry. The twofold corruption of the text passed into the latest of Mary's editions, and will be found surviving in the smaller one-volume edition of the Poetical Works issued by Moxon (1853) together with an error in the division of the paragraphs.

homme a moitié fou," says a witty French writer. Few men are so fortunate as was Mahomet, to make converts in their own family—certain it is, that Shelley's never valued or appreciated his character, or his surpassing genius. Sir Timothy had no respect for learning but as a means of worldly advancement—a stepping-stone to political power. After Percy Bysshe's expulsion, he took a hatred to books, and even carried his animosity to education so far that he never employed a steward who could read or write. He was an enemy to the instruction of the children of the poor, and on the occasion of his younger son's going to school, said to him, "You young rascal, don't you be like your brother. Take care you don't learn too much;" a piece of advice very palatable to boys, and which, doubtless, the promising youth fulfilled to the letter, with filial obedience.

But if Shelley's expulsion rudely severed all domestic ties—alienated the hearts of his parents from him—it was the rock on which all the prospects of wedded happiness split. Further communication with Miss Grove was prohibited; and he had the heartrending agony of soon knowing that she was lost to him for ever. By a sort of *presentiment* of this blight to all his hopes, he says in his Romance of *St. Irvyne*, at the commencement of one of the chapters: "How sweet are the scenes endeared to us by ideas which we have cherished in the society of one we have loved. How melancholy to wander amongst them again after an absence perhaps of years—years which have changed the tenor of our existence—have changed even [the friend,] *the dear friend* for whose sake alone the landscape lives in the memory—for whose sake tears flow at each varying feature of the scenery which catches the eye of one who has never seen them since he saw them

with the being who was dear to him.”¹ Byron’s whole life is said to have received its bias from love—from his blighted affection for Miss Chaworth. There was a similarity in the fates of the two poets; but the effects were different: Byron sought for refuge in dissipation, and gave vent to his feelings in satire. He looked upon the world as his enemy, and visited what he deemed the wrong of one, on his species at large. Shelley, on the contrary, with the goodness of a noble mind, sought by a more enlarged philosophy to dull the edge of his own miseries, and in the sympathy of a generous and amiable nature for the sufferings of his kind, to find relief and solace for a disappointment which in Byron had only led to wilful exaggeration of its own despair. Shelley, on this trying occasion, had the courage to live, in order that he might labour for one great object, the advancement of the human race, and the amelioration of society, and strengthened himself in a resolution to devote his energies to this ultimate end, being prepared to endure every obloquy, to make any sacrifice for its accomplishment; and would, if necessary, have died for the cause. He had the ambition, thus early manifested, of becoming a reformer; for one Sunday, after we had been to Rowland Hill’s chapel, and were dining together in the city, he wrote to him under an assumed name, proposing to preach to his congregation. Of course he received no answer. Had he applied to Carlile² or Owen, perhaps the reply would have been affirmative. But he had perhaps scarcely heard of their names or doctrines, even if they had commenced their career.

¹ This extract follows, with moderate accuracy, the opening of Chapter vii of *St. Irvyne*.

² Richard Carlile, the republican

agitator, and his wife also, suffered in the cause of freedom—especially the cause of free speech and a free press.

It is possible that Shelley wrongly classified that excellent and worthy man, Rowland Hill, who had renounced the advantages of birth and position for the good of his species, with the ranting Methodists, or violent demagogues of the time; in all probability, he had never even heard of him before that day, when he stood amid the crowd that overflowed the chapel through the open door. It was at best a foolish and inconsiderate act—and can only be excused from his total ignorance of the character of Rowland Hill, and the nature of his preaching.¹

That Shelley's disappointment in love affected him acutely, may be seen by some lines inscribed erroneously, "On F. G.," instead of "H. G.," and doubtless of a much earlier date than assigned by Mrs. Shelley to the fragment:—

Her voice did quiver as we parted,
Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came,—and I departed
Heeding not the words then spoken—

¹ It is to be feared that the octagonal Surrey Chapel of the Blackfriars Road, of which that eminent unconventional divine the Rev. Rowland Hill was pastor from 1784 till 1833, is not now held in very active remembrance. As I passed and repassed the strange building in 1860 on my way from lodgings on "the Surrey side" to St. Martin's le Grand, to and from my daily work for a grateful country under a now much more renowned Rowland Hill (the Penny Postage benefactor of the commercial world), a story told me by my father a year or two earlier came frequently to my mind; and I trust Medwin and his young cousin the poet had no part in it,—though the standing "among the crowd that overflowed the chapel" is suggestive. My father's version of a tale possibly well known was

that the stalwart preacher, making his way as was his custom through this standing crowd to occupy his pulpit and preach his sermon, overheard one Sunday some thoughtless youths discussing a plan to "have a lark" by interrupting the preacher. Hill ascended his pulpit, paused portentously, fixed the peccant group severely with his eye, and at length amid a dead silence gave out his text:—"The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the people that forget God; and there's a lark for you!" The conspirators dribbled out; and there was peace in the brick-built octagon. I have not searched the biographies of the preacher by Sherman, Sidney, Jones, and Broome, to find out whether this is a "chestnut"; it is more grateful to me to pay the tribute of a note to the memory of the best of fathers.

Misery! O misery!

This world is all too wide for thee!—

proving that his first Love was inerasable from his mind, that it was an occurrence resplendent with the summer of life—recalling the memory of many a vision—or perhaps but one—which the delusive exhalations of hope invested with a rose-like lustre as of the morning, yet unlike morning, a light which once extinguished never could return.¹

Shelley's residence with his family was become, for the reasons I have stated, so irksome to him, that he soon took refuge in London, from

His cold fireside and alienated home.

I have found a clue, to develop the mystery of how he became acquainted with Miss Westbrook. The father, who was in easy circumstances, kept an hotel in London, and sent his daughter to a school at Balam Hill, where Shelley's second sister made one of the boarders. It so happened, that as Shelley was walking in the garden of this seminary, Miss Westbrook past them. She was a handsome *blonde*, not then sixteen. Shelley was so struck with her beauty, that after his habit of writing, as in the case of Felicia Browne and others, to ladies who interested him, he contrived, through the intermediation of his sister, to carry on a correspondence with her. The intimacy was not long in ripening. The young lady was nothing loth to be wooed, and after a period of only a few

¹ Mrs. Shelley was of course right. "Fanny Godwin" (more strictly Frances Wollstonecraft), who was Mary Shelley's half-sister, that is to say the child of Mary Wollstonecraft and Gilbert Imlay, is thought to have been more or less enamoured of Shelley. She poisoned herself on the 9th of

October 1816. Her death was a great grief to the Shelleys; and a calamity for Godwin, to whom she was very good and dutiful. Her identity with the protagonist of these lovely lines disposes of Medwin's tall twaddle about "proving" &c. &c.

weeks, it was by a sort of knight-errantry that Shelley carried her off from Chapel-street, Grosvenor-square, where she sorely complained of being subject to great oppression from her sister and father. Whether this was well or ill-founded, is little to the purpose to enquire. Probably, Shelley and Miss Harriett Westbrook—there might have been some magic in the name of Harriett—had not met half a dozen times in all before the elopement; they were totally unacquainted with each other's dispositions, habits, or pursuits; and took a rash step, that none but a mere boy and girl would have taken. Well might it be termed an ill-judged and ill-assorted union,—bitter were destined to be its fruits.

All the circumstances relative to the progress of this affair, he kept a profound secret, nor in any way alluded to it in our correspondence, nor was it even guessed at by Dr. Grove, in whose house he was lodging in Lincoln's Inn Fields; nor on parting with Shelley at Horsham, the day before his departure, when he borrowed some money of my father, did he throw out a hint on the subject. Authors make the strangest matches. It was at the end of August, 1811, that the youthful pair set out to Gretna Green, where they were united after the formula, which, as we have lately had so circumstantial an account of the ceremony, I shall not repeat, though he many years after detailed it to me, with other particulars not therein included. From thence the "new-married couple" betook themselves to Edinburgh. Their stay in that city was short; for by a letter dated Cuckfield, the residence of an uncle, of the 21 Oct., 1811, he says,—“In the course of three weeks or a month, I shall take the precaution of being remarried.” In fact, he did execute that intention. This uncle, the gallant Captain Pilfold, whose name is

well known in his country's naval annals, (for he was in the battle of the Nile, and commanded a frigate at that of Trafalgar, and was the friend of Nelson) supplied the place of a father to Shelley, receiving him at his house when abandoned and cast off by Sir Timothy, who, if irritated at Shelley's expulsion from Oxford, was rendered furious by the *mésalliance*, and cut off his allowance altogether, the very moderate allowance of £200 a year.

By the advice of Captain Pilfold, who supplied Shelley with money for his immediate necessity, he sought in a distant county some cheap abode, and proceeded to Cumberland.

I have before me two letters¹ from Keswick—in that dated Nov. 26th, 1811, he says,—

"We are now in this lovely spot where for a time we have fixed our residence; the rent of our cottage, furnished, is £1 10s. per week. We do not intend to take up our abode here for a perpetuity, but should wish to have a house in Sussex. Perhaps you could look out for one for us. Let it be in some picturesque, retired place,—St. Leonard's Forest, for instance; let it not be nearer to London than Horsham, nor near any populous manufacturing, dissipated town; we do not covet either a propinquity to barracks. Is there any possible method of raising money without any exorbitant interest, until my coming of age? I hear that you and my father have had a rencontre; I was surprised he dared attack you; but men always hate those whom they have injured; this hatred was, I suppose, a stimulus which supplied the place of courage. Whitton has written to me, to state the impropriety of my letter to my mother and sister; this letter I have returned with a passing remark on the back of it. I find that

¹ Both letters are to Medwin's father. The first is the principal part of No. 3 in the Appendix, but with minor variations in the text. Mr. Ingpen in his collection of Shelley's Letters varies more or less from both texts, and adds a few words to the postscript of the Appendix version. No doubt his recension is the one to rely on, as

he has been in communication on the subject with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, in whose library the original is said to be preserved. The second is about one half of No. 4 in the Appendix—hacked and jumbled in a manner disgracefully unjust to Shelley, as may be seen by comparison.

affair on which those letters spoke, is become the general gossip of the idle newsmongers of Horsham—they give me credit for having invented it. They do my invention much honour, but greatly discredit their own penetration."

The affair here referred to may be passed *sub silentia*, but during Sir Timothy's absence in London, on his parliamentary duties, Lady Shelley invited Shelley to Field Place, where he was received, to use his own words, with much *show-affection*. Some days after he had been there, his mother produced a parchment deed, which she asked him to sign, to what purport I know not; but he declined so doing, and which he told me he would have signed, had he not seen through the false varnish of hypocritical caresses. This anecdote is not idle gossip—but comes from Shelley himself.

The second letter bears date, Keswick, Nov. 30th, 1811.

"When I last saw you, you mentioned the imprudence of raising money even at my present age, at 7 per cent. *We are now so poor as to be actually in danger of being every day deprived of the necessaries of life.* I would thank you to remit me a small sum for immediate expenses. Mr. Westbrook has sent a small sum, *with an intimation that we are to expect no more*; this suffices for the immediate discharge of a few debts, and it is nearly with our last guinea that we visit the Duke of Norfolk at Greystoke; to-morrow we return to Keswick. I have very few hopes from this visit; that reception into Abraham's bosom, (meaning a reconciliation with his father) appeared to me, to be the consequence of some infamous concessions, which are, I suppose, synonymous with *duty*. Love to all."

The overture, of which the Duke was the intermediary, seems to have failed. His Grace had written to several gentlemen amongst his agricultural friends in Cumberland, requesting them to pay such neighbourly attentions to the solitary young people, as circumstances might place in their power; Southey, with his usual kindness, and the ladies of his family, immediately called on him.

Speaking of his sojourn to Leigh Hunt, he says,

“Do you know that when I was in Cumberland, I got Southey to borrow a copy of Berkeley, from Mr. Lloyd, and I remember observing some pencil notes in it, probably written by Lloyd, which I thought particularly acute; one especially struck me, as being the assertion of a doctrine, of which even then I had been long persuaded, and on which I had founded much of my persuasions as regarded the imagined cause of the universe: ‘Mind cannot create, it can only perceive.’”

The beauty of the lakes, which were ever fresh in Shelley's memory, made a powerful impression on his imagination; and he would have wished to have fixed himself there, but found Cumberland any thing but a cheap place—or for eight months in the year, anything but a sequestered one. Where he fixed his abode, was in part of a house standing about half a mile out of Keswick, on the Penrith road, which they had been induced to take by one of their new friends; (probably Southey), more, says De Quincey, I believe in that friend's intention, for the sake of bringing them easily within his hospitalities, than for any beauty in the place. There was, however, a pretty garden attached to it; and whilst walking in this, one of the Southey party asked Mrs. Shelley if the garden had been let with this part of the house? “Oh no!” she replied, “the garden is not ours, but then you know the people let us run about in it, whenever Percy and I are tired of sitting in the house.” The *naïvetè* of this expression, “run about,” contrasting so picturesquely with the intermitting efforts of the girlish wife at supporting a matron-like gravity, now that she was doing the honours of her house to married ladies, caused all the party to smile. De Quincey says, that he might have placed some neighbourly advantages at Shelley's disposal—Grassmere, for instance, itself, at that

time, where, tempted by a beauty that had not been sullied, Wordsworth then lived,—in Grassmere, Elleray, and Professor Wilson nine miles further,—finally, his own library, which being rich in the wickedest of German speculations, would naturally have been more to Shelley's taste than the Spanish library of Southey. "But," says De Quincey, "all these temptations were negatived for Shelley by his sudden departure. Off he went in a hurry, but why he went, or whither he went, I did not inquire." Why he went is explained by the letter of Nov. 30th: his being so poor as to be actually in danger of every day being deprived of the necessaries of life—his visiting the Duke of Norfolk with his last guinea. That he was enabled to quit Keswick was owing to a small advance of money made him by my father. De Quincey was altogether mistaken in saying that his wife's father had made over to him an annual income of £200 a-year [*sic*], as proved by the words, "Mr. Westbrook has sent a small sum, with an intimation that we are to expect no more." Shelley had heard that Ireland was a cheap country, and without any leavestaking, betook himself to Cork, and after visiting the lakes of Killarney, where he was enchanted with the arbutus-covered islands that stud it—lakes, he used to say, more beautiful than those of Switzerland or Italy,—came to Dublin. Ireland was then, as ever, in a disturbed state, and with an enthusiasm for liberty, and sympathy for the sufferings of that misgoverned people, whose wretched cabins and miserable fare, shared in common with their companions, the swine, he had beheld with pity and disgust during his tour, it was natural that he should take a lively interest in bettering their condition. He attended some public meetings, where he displayed that eloquence for which he was remarkable,

and which would doubtless have distinguished him, had he embarked in a political career in the senate. Nor did he confine himself to speeches. In a letter dated from No. 17, Grafton Street, of the date of the 10th March, 1812, he says, "I am now engaged with a literary friend in the publication of a voluminous History of Ireland, of which 250 pages are already printed, and for the completion of which, I wish to raise £250; I could obtain undeniable security for its payment at the expiration of eighteen months. Can you tell me how I ought to proceed? The work will produce great profits."¹ Who his coadjutor was I know not; but it would seem that the History of Ireland was abandoned for a pamphlet on the state of the country, which he sent me. It was rather a book than a pamphlet, closely and cheaply printed, very ill-digested, but abounding in splendid passages. The tenor of it was by no means violent, and, I remember well, suggested a policy afterwards so successfully adopted by the great *agitating Pacificator*,—a policy which Shelley laid down in one of his letters many years afterwards, where he says:—"The great thing to do is to hold the balance between popular impatience and tyrannical obstinacy, and inculcate with fervour, both the right of resistance, and the duty of forbearance. You know my principles incite me to take all the good I can get in politics, for ever aspiring to something more. I am one of those whom nothing will fully satisfy, but who are ready to be partially satisfied with all that is practicable."

¹ The letter to Medwin's father here referred to, but dated the 20th of March, is No. 5 in the Appendix. Whatever Shelley may have written on this subject was meant to be incorporated in John Lawless's *Compendium of the History of Ireland*;

but the poet's contributions to the subject have never, as far as we know, been printed, and are said by Professor Dowden to "have disappeared beyond hope of recovery" (*Life of Shelley*, i. 257).

A friend of mine in Dublin has searched among the innumerable pamphlets in the public library there, for this, but in vain.¹

His departure from Ireland was occasioned, as he told me, by a hint from the police, and he in haste took refuge in the Isle of Man—that then *imperium in imperio*, that extrajudicial place, where the debtor was safe from his creditor, and the political refugee found an asylum in his obscurity from the myrmidons of the law. He remained, however, at Douglas but a short time, and on his passage to some port in Wales, had a very narrow escape from his fatal element. He had embarked in a small trading vessel which had only three hands on board. It was the month of November, and the weather, boisterous when they left the harbour, increased to a dreadful gale. The skipper attributed to Shelley's exertions, so much the safety of the vessel, that he refused on landing to accept his fare.²

After all these, and many other wanderings, we find Shelley at Rhayader, Radnorshire. Its vicinity to Combe Ellen, (which Bowles has immortalised) the occasional summer residence of his cousin, Thomas Grove, probably led him to desire to fix himself in that neighbourhood, and he selected Nantgwillt. In a letter dated April 25th, 1812, he expresses a desire to take a lease of the place, and says,—“So eligible an opportunity for settling in a cheap, retired, romantic spot, will scarcely occur again.” But how was he to purchase the stock of two hundred

¹ *An Address to the Irish People* (Dublin, 1812) was indeed a dreadful piece of typography, 24 pp. 8vo, price 5d. The few extant copies vary in colour between whitey-brown and brownish-yellow. Claire Clairmont's copy (*penes me*) is plea-

santly variegated, and has the salient virtue of being unshorn.

² Professor Dowden (*ib.*, i. 266, note) discredits this anecdote, and tells us that the departure from Dublin took place on the 4th of April, and the voyage ended at Holyhead.

acres of ground, and pay a rent of ninety-eight pounds a year? In fact he soon perceived the incompetency of his means for such an undertaking. It was subsequent to this period, that he settled himself in a cottage belonging to Mr. Maddocks, in Caernarvonshire. Shelley was of opinion, that for some time after he had left Ireland, he was under the *surveillance* of the police, and that his life was in danger from its emissaries; doubtless, a most erroneous notion, but one which the total sequestration, and wild solitude of the country, contributed to render an *idée fixe*. He was many years afterwards under a similar delusion in Italy—and told me that on quitting Naples he was afraid of being arrested.

I knew Mr. Maddocks well, and had many conversations with him at Florence regarding a circumstance that occurred, or which Shelley supposed did occur, in North Wales. The horrors of the inn in *Count Fathom* were hardly surpassed by the recital Shelley used to make of this scene. The story as dictated by him was simply this:—At midnight, sitting alone in his study on the ground floor, he heard a noise at the window, saw one of the shutters gradually unclosed, and a hand advanced into the room armed with a pistol. The muzzle was directed towards him, the aim taken, the weapon cocked, and the trigger drawn. The trigger missed fire. Shelley, with that personal courage which particularly distinguished him, rushed out in order to discover and seize the assassin. As he was in the act of passing through the outer door, at the entrance of an avenue leading into the garden, he found himself face to face with the ruffian, whose pistol missed fire a second time. This opponent he described as a short, stout, powerful man. Shelley, though slightly built, was tall, and though incapable of

supporting much fatigue, and seeming weak, had the faculty in certain moments of evoking extraordinary powers, and concentrating all his energies to a given point. This singular phenomenon, which has been noticed in others, he displayed on this occasion; and it made the aggressor and Shelley no unequal match. It was a contest between mind and matter, between intellectual and brute force. After long and painful wrestling, the victory was fast declaring itself for moral courage, which his antagonist perceiving, extricated himself from his grasp, darted into the grounds, and disappeared among the shrubbery. Shelley made a deposition the next day before the magistrate, Mr. Maddocks, of these facts. An attempt to murder caused a great sensation in that part of the principality, where not even a robbery had taken place for several years. No solution could be found for the enigma; and the opinion generally was that the whole was a nightmare—a horrid dream, the effect of an overheated imagination. The savage wildness of the scenery—the entire isolation of the place—the profound metaphysical speculations in which Shelley was absorbed—the want of sound and wholesome reading, and the ungeniality of his companions (for he had one besides his wife, a spinster of a certain age for a humble companion to her)—all combined to foster his natural bent for the visionary, and confirm Mr. Maddocks's idea, that the events of that horrible night were a delusion. This lady, a certain Miss Kitchener [*sic* for Hitchener] who had accompanied the young couple from Sussex, where she kept a school, was an *esprit fort*, *ceruleanly blue*, and fancied herself a poetess. I only know one anecdote of her, which Shelley used to relate, laughing till the tears ran down his cheek. She perpetrated an ode, proving

that she was a great stickler for the rights of her sex, the first line of which ran thus :—

All, all are men—*women* and all!¹

He himself appears to have written nothing in Wales, if we except some stanzas breathing a tone of deep despondency, of which I will quote four lines :—

Away, away to thy sad and silent home,
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth,
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.²

¹ She wrote, at all events, a respectable topographical volume of verse called *The Weald of Sussex* (not *Kent* as in Ingpen's Letters, i. xxiii) with more or less learned notes. The book was "printed for Black, Young, and Young, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden," and issued in 1822. I find no mention of Shelley by name, although he whom she had known when she was "*Portia*" (and not "*the Brown Demon*") had become one of the chief glories of her beloved county. On Tre Madoc and Mr. Madox (as she spells the name) she has a lengthy note in prose and verse, in which her poet-friend of ten years earlier might well have figured. She could not at that time have been stirred by the news of his death, for her preface is dated the 9th of August 1821; but that she had not forgotten him is made evident in some "Apologetic Stanzas" prefixed to the poem. The first quatrain is—

Yes, little volume, yes, un-
shielded go,
Without the sanction of patri-
cian name,
O'er thy deserts a splendid veil
to throw,
Or gain the meed of cheaply
purchased fame.

And before closing the address, in which she seems to mix up her

book and herself somewhat eccentrically, she had evolved these lines :

No kindred friendship soothed
thine infant years,
No brilliant converse to elicit
truth,
When leaps the soul, as sweet
response it hears,
And wisdom mingles with the
fire of youth.

Yet once,—a vision waked thy
slumbering lyre,
Which fancy whispered wise,
and great, and fair,
One which could loftiest,
noblest strains inspire,
And to sweet cadence, tune thy
wildest air.

What would that "vision" have thought of the closing lines in the Tre-Madoc verses (page 118) ?—

Behold this work, ye triflers of
a day!
See what a Madox in few years
has done,
And own, *important is the life of
Man!*

² These lines have of course no connexion with the Brown Demon or Wales,—belonging as they do to that exquisitely wrought yet seem-

Mr. Maddocks, like all who really knew Shelley, perfectly idolised him. I have often heard him dilate on his numerous acts of benevolence, his relieving the distresses of the poor, visiting them in their humble abodes, and supplying them with food and raiment and fuel during the winter, which on that bleak coast, exposed to the north, is particularly severe. But he laid Mr. Maddocks under a debt of gratitude that could never be repaid.

During his temporary absence in a distant county in England, an extraordinary high tide menaced that truly Dutch work, his embankment against the sea, by which he had rescued from it many thousand acres. Shelley, always ready to be of service to his friends, and anxious to save the dyke from destruction, which would have involved his landlord and hundreds in ruin, heading a paper with a subscription of £500, took it himself all round the neighbourhood, and raised a considerable sum, which, enabling him to employ hundreds of workmen, stopped the progress of the waves. I cite this as a proof of his active benevolence. His heart and purse were, almost to improvidence, open to all.

Some one said of another, that he would have divided his last sixpence with a friend; Shelley would have given it all to a stranger in distress. I have no clue to discover in what manner he contrived to find money for this subscription, or for the acts of charity here detailed. It must have been raised at some great sacrifice.

After a year's abode in the Principality, Shelley betook himself to London, where he arrived in the spring of 1813.

ing-spontaneous burst of autobiography headed "April, 1814," published with *Alastor* and other poems (1816). The poem chronicles the end of the Bracknell period,

when his own home, whereof Harriett was mistress, being loveless and desolate, he was finding solace and sympathy with the ladies of the Boinville-Turner circle.

In a letter dated 21st June, Cooke's hotel, Dover-street, he says, "Depend on it that no artifice of my father's shall seduce me to take a life interest in the estate; I feel with sufficient force, that I should not by such conduct be guilty alone of injustice to myself, but to those who have assisted me by kind offices and advice during my adversity." It would seem from this letter that his father had thrown out such a proposition—and gloated on his son's poverty, under the hope that it and not his will would consent to such terms as he chose to dictate.

In another letter, dated the same month, he says, "The late negotiations between myself and my father have been abruptly broken off by the latter. This I do not regret, as his caprice and intolerance would not have suffered the wound to heal." These letters were addressed to my father.¹ A relation of mine, who visited him at his hotel, and dined with him on the 6th of July, 1813, says that he was become from principle and habit a Pythagorean, and confined himself strictly to a vegetable diet. He was always temperate, but had completely renounced wine.

Mrs. Shelley was confined of a daughter at this hotel between the 21st and 28th June. He was at that time in great pecuniary straits, which it seems that Sir Timothy² did nothing to alleviate; on the contrary, was hardened to his necessities, by which he hoped to profit in the hard bargain which he was endeavouring, as it appears, to exact from him. His privations must have been extreme, during the ensuing winter and spring; for his lawyer says in a letter, dated April, 1814,—“Mr. Shelley

¹ The letters from which these extracts are quoted (in reversed order as to time) are No. 7 and No. 8 in the Appendix.

² Just then there was of course no such person as “Sir Timothy,”—Shelley's grandfather, Sir Bysshe, being still alive.

is entitled to a considerable landed property in Sussex, under a family settlement, but which is previously liable to the life estates of his grandfather and father, both of whom are living; upon which property, as his family cannot, during the lifetime of his grandfather, assist him, he has used the utmost of his endeavours to raise money for the payment of his debts, *without success*." How he continued under these circumstances to exist, I know not. Among the few other persons with whom Shelley associated in London was the celebrated Godwin. Their acquaintance also commenced by Shelley's writing to him as he was in the habit of doing to those whose works interested him, and Godwin's were at that time his vademecum. During this year the Poet became a frequent visitor at Godwin's House, and there it was he saw Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. Godwin's principles on the subject of matrimony had been fully promulgated, and when he *did* marry Mary Wollstonecraft, he thought it necessary to apologize to the public for his want of consistency, and treat the ceremony as a sacrifice to the conventionalities of the World to which for the Lady's sake he thought it right to accede. It is to be hoped however that lax as Godwin's opinions were, he was not privy to the connection which had been forming between Shelley and his Daughter. Miss Godwin was then very young, scarcely 17. It could not have been her personal charms that captivated him, for to judge of her in 1820, she could not have been handsome, or even what may be denominated pretty. Shelley seems to have had a rage for Elopements; but it was not the romance of such a *Situation* (to use a dramatic phrase) that led to this step, there were other and more substantial reasons for her throwing herself on his protection. I must mention among his friends at this period

Mr. Hookham of Bond Street.—On the occasion of the Prosecution of a Publisher of Paine's *Age of Reason* Shelley had addressed a Letter in the form of a Pamphlet to Lord Ellenborough, and forwarded it to that respectable bookseller. The Pamphlet¹ never appeared but it led to an acquaintance which afterwards was very useful to Shelley, for he obtained an asylum under his roof at a time when perhaps he found it difficult to procure one to shelter him. Shelley told me that when staying with him he was offered a considerable sum to work up the materials of Lady Caroline Lamb's novel of *Glenarvon*, which he declined.

It was however after a severe mental struggle—a conflict not without the poignancy of some remorse, that almost upset the balance of his reason, as witnessed by one whom he made privy to his design and who with all the earnestness of friendship strongly appealed to him against the step, that he at length came to the resolution of separating from his wife and child. What Miss Godwin's own feelings on this occasion were, St. Simonian before St. Simon as she was, may be more than conjectured, when she trusted her future destiny to one of whose inconstancy—(tho' his treachery was truth to her—) she had so glaring a proof.² But I have first a few words to say—a few remarks to make.—

In looking back to this marriage of Shelley's with an

¹ *A Letter to Lord Ellenborough* was printed at Barnstable in 1812, but not published. Mr. Syle, at whose press it was put into type, took fright and destroyed all he could of the intended publication; but Shelley rescued a few copies. There is one in the Shelley bequest at the Bodleian. The prosecuted publisher was Daniel Isaac Eaton, a remark-

able man enough in the story of free speech and free press.

² This passage is one of the manuscript interpolations; but the odd phrase "St. Simonian before St. Simon" is perfectly legible. What it means we need not attempt to determine. The socialist Count St. Simon was born in 1760 and lived till 1825.

individual neither adapted to his condition in life, nor fitted for his companionship by accomplishments or manners, it is surprising, not that it should have ended in a separation, but that for so long a time, (for time is not to be calculated by years,) he should have continued to drag on a chain, every link of which was a protraction of torture.

It was not without mature deliberation, and a conviction common to both, of their utter incapacity of rendering the married state bearable to each other, that they came to a resolve, which, the cold, formal English world, with its conventionalities, under any circumstances short of legally proved infidelity, stamps as a dereliction of duty on the side of the man. Ours is the only country where the yoke of marriage, when it is an iron one, weighs down and crushes those who have once thrown it over their necks. It may be compared to the leaden mantle in the Inferno. It is true that the Roman Catholic religion in some countries, such as Italy and France, except by the express permission, rarely obtained, (though it was in the case of the Countess Guiccioli,) of the Pope, does not allow divorces; but separations, tantamount to them, constantly take place by mutual agreement, without placing the parties in a false position as regards society. Spain has emancipated herself from the inextricability of the chain. In Poland and Russia remarriages are of daily occurrence. But let us look into Protestant lands, *for we are yet Protestants*, and we shall find that in most of the states in Germany, nothing is easier than to dissolve the tie. The marriage laws in Prussia are very liberal. In Norway the parties cannot be disunited under three years. In Sweden one year's notice suffices. But with us, not even confirmed insanity is sufficient to dissolve a marriage!

Our laws admit of but one ground for divorces, and who with any fine feeling would like to drag through the mire of public infamy, her who had once been dear to him—the mother, perhaps, of his children? How long will our statute-book continue to uphold this barbarous and unnatural law, on the very doubtful plea (according to Dr. Wheatley [*sic*] and others) that marriage is of divine institution—a law a disgrace to our civilization, the source of more miseries than all “that flesh is heir to?”

Ill-omened and most unfortunate, indeed, was the union! He had joined himself to one utterly incapable of estimating his talents—one destitute of all delicacy of feeling, who made his existence “A blight and a curse;” one who had “a heart, hard and cold,”

Like weight of icy stone,
That crushed and withered his.

It is in his own writings, and from them his life may be drawn as in a mirror, that the best insight is to be found of the character of the first Mrs. Shelley. He calls her

A mate with feigned sighs,
Who fled in the April hour.

In the bitterness of his soul, he exclaims:

Alas! that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one;
Such one I sought in vain,—then black despair,
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
Over the world in which I moved alone.¹

And we find her in the *Epipsychidion* thus allegorised:

Then one whose voice was venomed melody
Sate by a well, under blue nightshade-bowers.

¹ See Stanza vi of the Dedication to *Laon and Cythna* (*The Revolt of Islam*). “Like weight of icy stone” &c. is badly mistranscribed from the same

stanza, somewhat as the previous snatch is from “The Serpent is shut out from Paradise.”

Her touch was as electric poison—flame
 Out of her looks into my vitals came,
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
 A killing air that pierced like honeydew
 Into the core of my green heart, and lay
 Upon its leaves, until as *hair grown grey*
On a young brow, they hid its unblown prime
 With ruins of unseasonable time.¹

The beautiful fragment on Love which appeared originally in *The Athenæum*, and may be found among the Prose Works, proves with what a lacerated heart he poured out his love, in aspiration for an object who could sympathise with his; and how pathetically does he paint his yearning after such a being, when he says:—

“I know not the internal constitution of other men. I see that in some external attributes they resemble me; but when misled by that appearance, I have thought to appeal to something in common, and unburthen my inmost soul, I have found my language misunderstood, like one in a desert and savage land. The more opportunities they have afforded me for experience, the wider has appeared the interval between us, and to a greater distance have the points of sympathy been withdrawn. With a spirit ill fitted to sustain such proofs trembling and feeble through its tenderness, I have everywhere sought sympathy, and found only repulse and disappointment.”

And after a description of what he did seek for in this union, he adds, “Sterne says, that if he were in a desert, he would love some cypress. No sooner is this want or power dead, than man becomes the living sepulchre of himself, and what yet survives is the mere wreck of what he was.”² The disappointed hopes that gave birth to this eloquence of passion, may be more than conjectured. To

¹ This is more or less misquoted, and, I should say, misapplied; but that is an open question.

² The extracts are not very accurately, nor, for Medwin, so very inaccurately, taken from the *Essays*,

Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments. This essay had appeared in *The Keepsake*; but it is by no means the same composition as that published by Medwin in *The Athenæum* and *The Shelley Papers*.

love, to be beloved, became an insatiable famine of his nature, which the wide circle of the universe, comprehending beings of such inexhaustible variety and stupendous magnitude of excellence, appeared too narrow and confined to satiate.

It was with the recollection of these withered feelings, that he afterwards, in his desolation, thus apostrophised¹ a wild swan that rose from a morass in the wilderness:—

Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird! thou voyagest to thine home!
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.

The example of the most surpassing spirits that have ever appeared, Dante, Shakspeare, and Milton, proves that poets have been most unfortunate in their matrimonial choice, not, as Moore would endeavour to establish, because such are little fitted for the wedded state, but because in the condition of society, which Shelley characterises as “a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilisation,” women are unequally educated, and are hence on an inequality with men, and unable to form a just estimate of their genius, or to make allowances for those eccentricities of genius, those deviations from the standard of common minds which they have set up.

Mr. Moore is a married man, and as such his opinion is worth quoting, though I cannot agree with him in his deductions, that poets should never marry. He says, that “those who have often felt in themselves a call to matrimony, have kept aloof from such ties, and the exercise of the softer duties and rewards of *being amiable*

¹ The Poet in *Alastor* is represented as thus addressing a swan rising from “the lone Chorasmian shore,”

which was certainly not one of Shelley’s haunts, as the historian would seem to imply.

reserved themselves for the high and hazardous chances of being great." He adds, that "to follow poetry, one must forget father and mother, and cling to it alone;" and he compares marriage to "the wormwood star, whose light filled the waters on which it fell, with bitterness."

But if a poetical temperament unfits *mankind* from entering into the married state, and if those who possess it are to be debarred from those sympathies which are the only leaven in the dull dough of mortality,—if they are to be made responsible for all the misery of which such unions are often the fertile source, it would, in his view, be only fair to consider that poetesses are to be visited with a similar measure of reproach; and, alas! how many of the female writers of this and former days, have found marriage anything but a bed of roses! Charlotte Smith, L. E. L.,¹ Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Norton, stand at the head of the long catalogue with us. In America, Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Sigourney. In Germany, beginning with the Karschin, their name is legion. In France, two examples suffice—De Stael and Georges Sand. Were they alone to blame? Who will venture to cast the first stone at them? Surely not Mr. Moore, who is too *gallant*, and too fond of the sex, to raise a whisper against their good fame? Lady Byron also is a poetess,—good, bad, or indifferent,—and on the principle, that acids neutralise each other, that remarkable case ought, on the homœopathic system, to have proved an exception to the general rule, instead of being the rule itself.

¹ It ought not to be necessary to fill up these initials with the name of the once deservedly popular Letitia Elizabeth Landon, who, as Mrs. Maclean, met with a tragic fate on the West Coast of Africa, falling a victim to the jealousy of one

of her husband's mistresses. Medwin might have added to his list the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Tighe (born Mary Blachford), authoress of *Psyche*, who, neglected by an unappreciative husband, died in 1810, at the age of thirty-six.

The last name calls up a whole Iliad of woes. Yes, true it is, and "pity 'tis, 'tis true," that two other poets must be added to the number of the unfortunates,—two the greatest of our times, Shelley and Byron. The world has given up troubling itself about the causes of the domestic differences of "the three gods of poetry," as they soon will about those of the two last; ceasing, ere long, to canvass Byron's feverish existence, to speculate on his intrigues, or to think about Lady Byron or the first Mrs. Shelley, more than it now does la Signora Dante, Mrs. Shakespeare, or Mrs. Milton.¹ But there was this difference in the destinies of the two poet-friends: Byron was separated from Lady Byron, by Lady Byron, against his will, after a short trial,—less than twelve months; Shelley and his wife parted by mutual consent, after a much longer test of the incompatibility of their tempers, and incapacity to render the duration of their union anything but an intolerable tyranny; and it must not be forgotten, too, that isolation from society made them perfectly acquainted with each other's dispositions and habits and pursuits. In both cases the world ranged itself on the weaker side; but if Byron had his measure of reproach and defamation, Shelley was persecuted with a more exceeding amount of obloquy, was finally doomed to be driven from his native land, placed under a ban by his friends and relations, and considered, as he says, "a rare prodigy of crime and pollution."

It was on the 28th of July 1814, that Shelley, as appears by the second volume of the *Posthumous Works*, left

¹ Mr. Gribble, one of Shelley's latest biographers, appears to think we have already arrived at the millennium predicted by Medwin. But to me it seems that, as long as folk will read spicy volumes, other

folk will be found to rake the mud for the worst that can be found to put forward about the "gods of poetry" belonging to the early part of last century, and bolster up so-called "romantic lives" of them.

London, with Miss W. Godwin and her half sister¹ the daughter of Godwin's second wife, Mrs. Clairmont, who continued to keep a book shop in the Strand after her marriage with Godwin.²—With that contempt of danger from an element ever his delight, which characterised him, and perhaps afraid of being overtaken by Godwin, he embarked with them in an open boat from Dover, and not without exposure to a gale of wind on the passage, succeeded in reaching Calais, and thence proceeded to Paris. There, after remaining a week, they resolved to walk through France. He went to the *Marché des Herbes*, purchased an ass, and thus pilgrimaging, the gipsy party started for Charenton. There finding the quadruped

¹ This reference indicates that the edition of the *Essays, Letters, &c.* which Medwin calls "the Posthumous Works" was the original two-volume edition of 1840. It is in the second volume that we find the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* and the letters, whereas the reprint of 1845 is in one volume. In the original edition of Medwin's book (1847, i. 213) the corresponding passage reads thus:

"With a view of in some degree renovating his health, which had suffered from intense study, his strict Pythagorean system of diet, that by no means agreed with his constitution, and the immoderate use of laudanum, in which he sought for an opiate to his harassed feelings, and in the hope, by the distraction of new scenes, to dull their irritability, on the 28th of July 1814, Shelley, as appears by the second volume of the *Posthumous Works*, left London, accompanied by the present Mrs. Shelley, the daughter of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, and another lady."

This was unscrupulous enough, as Mary was the legitimate daughter of Godwin, who had married Mary Wollstonecraft; but the revision

left by Medwin and now published seems to me to be deliberately spiteful with its "Miss W. Godwin" and her "half sister," Mary Jane Clairmont ("Claire") was no blood relation whatever of Mary's, but the daughter of the second Mrs. Godwin by her former husband, Clairmont. The young ladies might possibly have been described cumbrously as "step-half-sisters," seeing that one was the daughter of the other's step-mother. Let us hope Medwin wrote in simple ignorance of the facts.

² It was in the year 1801 that the widow Clairmont, being next-door neighbour to Godwin in the Polygon, Somers Town, courted, won, and married the widowed philosopher, already twice rejected of women. She helped her husband keep the wolf from the door—for the wolf was generally hard by—by making translations. In 1805 she devised a scheme for a bookselling business, which was set up and carried on under the style of M. J. Godwin & Co. for many years in Skinner Street. See Kegan Paul's *William Godwin* (2 vol., 1876), vol. ii, p. 58 *et seq.* So much for Mrs. Clairmont's "book shop in the Strand."

useless, they sold it, purchased a mule, and continued their peregrinations.

The destitution and ruin which the Cossacks had, locust like, left everywhere behind them in their pestilential march,—the distress of the plundered inhabitants,—their roofless cottages, the rafters black, and the walls dilapidated, made a deep impression on Shelley's mind, and gave a sting to his detestation of war and despotism.

Further pedestrianism being rendered impossible by a sprained ancle, he now bought an open voiture, on four wheels, for five napoleons, and hired a man with a mule, with eight more, to convey them to Neufchatel, which, after many inconveniences *en route*, they reached. A magical effect was produced on the travellers by the first sight of the Alps. They were, says the tourist, "a hundred miles distant, but reach so high in the heavens, that they look like those accumulated clouds of dazzling white, that arrange themselves on the horizon during summer,—their immensity staggers the imagination, and so far surpasses all conception, that it requires an effort of the understanding to believe that they indeed form a part of the earth."

With the improvidence peculiar to Shelley in pecuniary matters, he found that on his arrival at Neufchatel, his money was exhausted, and after obtaining thirty-eight pounds on the discount of a bill for forty pounds, at three months, (pretty good discount,) they journeyed on to Lucerne. On reaching the lake of Uri, they hired a boat. This romantic lake, remarkable for its deep seclusion and sacred solitude, is thus described: "The lake of Lucerne is encompassed on all sides by high mountains, that rise abruptly from the water. Sometimes their base points downwards perpendicularly, and casts a black shadow on

the waves,—sometimes they are covered with thick wood, whose dark foliage is interspersed by the brown, bare crags, on which the trees have taken root. In every part where a glade shows itself in the forest, it appears cultivated and cottages peep from among the woods. The most luxuriant islands, rocky and covered with moss, and bending trees, are sprinkled over the lake. Most of these are decorated by the figure of a saint, in wretched waxwork.”

After much search after a habitation, they at length domiciled themselves in two unfurnished rooms, in an ugly big house at Brunen, called the Chateau. These they hired at a guinea a month, had beds moved into them, and the next day took possession. It was a wretched place, with no comfort or convenience. It was with some difficulty that they could get any food prepared. As it was cold and rainy, they ordered a fire. They lighted an immense stove, which occupied a corner of the room, and when heated, they were obliged to throw open the windows, to prevent a kind of suffocation; added to this, there was but one person in Brunen who could speak French, a barbarous sort of German being the language of this part of Switzerland. It was with some difficulty, therefore, that they could get their ordinary wants supplied. Shelley’s amusement, meanwhile, was writing.

He commenced a romance on the subject of the Assassins. The fragment will be found in his *Prose Works*,¹ and evinces much power, being a wonderful improvement on his former attempts of the kind. He drew his inspiration from the scenes that were before his eyes.

“Nature undisturbed,” he says, “had become an enchantress in

¹ These extracts from the beautiful fragment of *The Assassins* are also taken from the *Essays, Letters, &c.*, but from the first volume.

these solitudes. She had collected here all that was divine and wonderful from the armoury of her own omnipotence. The very winds breathed health and renovation, and the joyousness of youthful courage. Fountains of chrystalline water played perpetually among the aromatic flowers, and mingled a freshness with their odour. The pine boughs became instruments of exquisite contrivance, among which the ever varying breeze waked music of new and more delightful melody. Such scenes of chaotic confusion and harrowing sublimity, surrounding and shutting in the vale, added to the delights of its secure and voluptuous tranquillity. No spectator could have refused to believe that some spirit of great intelligence and power had hallowed these wilds to a deep and solemn mystery."

He adds, that "the immediate effect of such a scene suddenly presented to the contemplation of mortal eyes, is seldom the subject of authentic record."

I have thought that the following passage bears some allusion to himself.

"An Assassin, accidentally the inhabitant of a civilized country, would wage unremitting war from principle against the predilections and distastes of the many. He would find himself compelled to adopt means which they would abhor, for the sake of an object which they could not conceive that he should propose to himself. Secure and self-enshrined in the magnificence and preeminence of his conceptions, spotless as the light of heaven, he would be the victim among men, of calumny and persecution. Incapable of distinguishing his motives, they would rank him among the vilest and most atrocious criminals. Great beyond all comparison with them, they would despise him in the presumption of their ignorance. Because his spirit burned with an unquenchable passion for their welfare, they would lead him, like his illustrious master, amidst scoffs and mockings and insults, to the remuneration of an ignominious death."

Such were some of his contemplations,—the prognostics, though not of his future destiny—to that extent—of a moral crucifixion. "There is [Mrs. Shelley says] great beauty in the sketch as it stands,—it breathes that spirit of domestic peace and general brotherhood, founded on love, which he afterwards developed in the *Prometheus Unbound* ;" and it might be added, in other of his works.

It had been the intention of the party to cross the St. Gothard, at the foot of which they were, and make an excursion into the north of Italy, but the idea was soon abandoned. They resolved to return to England, from which they were distant eight hundred miles. Was it possible, with twenty-eight pounds? enquires the tourist;—but there was no alternative—the attempt must be made. They departed from Lucerne in the *coche d'eau* for Loffenburg, a town on the Rhine, where the falls of that river prevented the same vessel from proceeding any further. There they engaged a small canoe to convey them to Mumph.

“It was long, narrow, and flat-bottomed, consisting mostly of deal boards, unpainted, and nailed together with so little care, that the water constantly poured in at the crevices, and the boat perpetually required emptying. The river was rapid and sped swiftly, breaking as it passed on innumerable rocks just covered with water. It was a sight of some dread to see the frail boat winding among the eddies of the rocks, which it was death to touch, and where the slightest inclination on one side would inevitably upset it.”

After a land-adventure, the breaking down of a *calèche* at Mumph, they with some difficulty reached Basle, and where, taking their passage in another boat, laden with merchandise, they bade adieu to Switzerland.

“We were carried down,” says the tourist, “by a dangerously rapid current, and saw on each side, hills covered with vines and trees, craggy cliffs, crowned by desolate towers and wooded islands, whose picturesque ruins peeped from between the foliage, and cast the shadows of their forms on the troubled waters without defacing them.”

Having reached Rotterdam, they embarked for England, and encountering another storm on the bar, where they were for some time aground, landed in London, on the 13th August. ¹Speaking of this six weeks' Tour the

¹ From here to the end of the paragraph is, like most of the nasti-

est bits about Mary, one of the parts added in the author's old age.

Author of a review of my work in the *Revue des deux Mondes* says that it was an Expedition of Gypsies, romantic, unconnected, improbable and *suspecte*, reminding us of the Pilgrimages of Rousseau and Therèse Vasseur.—Here pretended Spies affright the young Wanderers, there their trunks are pillaged.—On the road a child is born to these [*sic*] philosophical pair, after the manner of Therèse and Rousseau in the open air, in a fine summer morning, a part of the story which is however kept out of sight in this curious revelation which scarcely deserves to have been reprinted,—having been for the most part written by Mary W. Godwin who in the Preface *calls Shelley her Husband*.¹

I have heard Shelley frequently dilate with rapture on the descent of the Reuss and the Rhine. The remembrance of both, never faded from his memory, and furnished additional stores to his poetic mind, to be treasured up for after days, and reproduced in forms of surpassing sublimity and loveliness.

Yet though his imagination had been enchanted by the aspect of Nature in all her wonders, his bodily health was rather deteriorated than improved by the fatigues of this painful journey; the first part of it performed on foot beneath the burning suns, and through the arid plains and dusty roads of France; and the latter under exposure to the chill blasts of the snowy Alps, and the cold air of open boats. Money difficulties, the worst of all the evils of this life, had also contributed to blunt in a great degree the charm; for the harass of ways and means lies like a weight of lead on the spirit, and palsies enjoyment. He

¹ It is true that, in the little anonymous volume familiarly known as *The Six Weeks' Tour*, she mentioned the male of the travelling party as the author's husband; and her spirit

was still too proud in 1840 to revise her definition of that sacred term, which was after all a hereditary definition in the clan to which she belonged.

had spent during the six weeks, sixty pounds, and was obliged even to go on credit at Rotterdam for his passage money, in order to be enabled to set foot on his native shores.

When arrived there, he had to look forward to four months before he could hope to receive a single pound note of his anticipated allowance. His father's heart was steeled in obduracy, and with that hatred between fathers and sons which seems hereditary in the family, Sir Timothy shut his purse and his doors against him.

The estate, as it was supposed, was strictly entailed; consequently his coming into the property depended on his surviving his father. His own life was not insurable, and was in so precarious a state that he had no possibility of raising money on his contingency. He was now destined, therefore, to suffer all the horrors of destitution. He says in *The Cenci*,—

The eldest son of a rich nobleman,
Is heir to all his incapacities,—
He has great wants, and scanty powers.

How he contrived to live during almost a year in the metropolis, I know not; but he pathetically describes his situation in *Rosalind and Helen*:—

Thou knowest what a thing is poverty,
Among the fallen on evil days;
'Tis crime, and fear, and infamy,
And houseless want, in frozen ways
Wandering ungarmented, and pain;
And worse than all, that inward stain
Foul self-contempt, which drowns in tears
Youth's starlight smile, and makes its tears,
First like hot gall, then dry for ever.
And well thou knowest, a *mother* never
Would doom her children to this ill,—
And well he knew the same.

Under the prospect of being forced to support himself by a profession, he applied his talents to medicine, which he often told me he should have preferred to all others, as affording greater opportunities of alleviating the sufferings of humanity. He walked a hospital, and became familiar with death in all its forms,—“a lazar house, it was,”—I have heard him quote the passage—

wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased—all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture—qualms
Of heart-sick agony—all feverish kinds;

and where

Despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch.

And here, he told me, he himself expected it would have been his fate to breathe his last. His wants were, indeed, few; he still continued, contrary to the advice of his physician, his vegetable diet; for none but a Pythagorean can tell (*crede expertum*,) with what a repugnance he who has once tried the system, reverts to the use of animal food. But few as his wants were, his means were scarcely able to supply them, and he has been often known to give a beggar the bread required for his own support. At this time all his friends feared that he was rapidly dying of a consumption—abscesses were formed on his lungs and he suffered acute spasms—but these symptoms of pulmonary disease were fallacious.

He was not at that time acquainted with one, of whom I have often heard him speak with a gratitude and respect so justly due, and who is now, alas! no more, as much distinguished for the qualities of his heart as his talents;—why should I not name him?—Horace Smith. To his generous sympathy Shelley was throughout the latter part of his life greatly indebted. His purse was ever

open to him, and in those pecuniary embarrassments, which his extreme generosity to others often entailed on him, he never applied to his valued friend in vain.

But at the beginning of the year 1815, his worldly prospects brightened; the Shelley settlement, which is well known by lawyers, and quoted as a masterpiece of that legal casuistry called an entail, was found to contain an ultimate limitation of the reversion of the estates to the grandfather. A celebrated conveyancer, I believe the friend whom I have already mentioned in a former part of these memoirs, has the credit of having made this important discovery; and the consequence was, the fee simple of the estate, after his father's death, was vested in Shelley. He was thus enabled to dispose of it by will as he pleased; and not only this, he had the means of raising money to supply his necessities. Sir Timothy was well aware of his son's position, but was not prepared for the discovery of it. The news fell upon him like a thunder-bolt, he was furious; but being desirous of benefitting his family, by the advice of a solicitor, made some arrangement; but whether on a *post obit*, or what terms, I know not, with Shelley, for an annuity of eight hundred pounds a-year. Doubtless he took care to have good security for the same.

In the summer of this year, after a tour along the southern ¹coast of Devonshire, and a visit to Clifton Shelley rented a house on Bishopsgate [*sic*] Heath, on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness; accompanied by a few friends, he visited the source of the

¹ There is a letter from Shelley to Williams of Tremadoc written at Torquay on the 22nd of June 1815,

printed in Dowden's Life (i. 522) and in Ingpen's Letters (i. 442).

Thames, making a voyage from Windsor to Cricklade; on which occasion his Stanzas in the churchyard of Lechlade were written, that breathe a solemn harmony in unison with his own feelings; and conclude with the following aspiration,—

Here could I hope, like an [*sic for some*] enquiring child,
Sporting on graves, that Death did hide from human sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep,
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

On his return from this excursion, *Alastor* was composed. He spent, while writing it, his days in the Great Park. It is a reflex of all the wild, and wonderful, and lovely scenes drawn with a master hand, which he had witnessed. The savage crags of Caernarvonshire—the Alps, and glaciers, and ravines, and falls, and torrent-like streams of Switzerland—the majesty of the lordly Rhine, and impetuous Reuss—the Thames winding beneath banks of mossy slope, and meadows enamelled with flowers; and in its tranquil wanderings,¹

Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
That overhang its quietness.

But above all, the magnificent woodland of Windsor Forest, where

the oak,
Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
Embraces the light beech;

where

the pyramids
Of the tall cedar, overarching, frame
Most solemn domes within; and far below,
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
The ash and the acacia floating hang,
Tremulous and pale,—¹

were the sources from which he drew his inspiration.

¹ For these blank verse extracts 18, 431 *et seq.*, 479 *et seq.*, and in their true form see *Alastor*, lines 501–2.

It has been said of a great German author, I believe Herder, that he had but one thought, and that was the Universe. May it not be observed of Shelley, that he had but one thought, and that was Love—Love in its most comprehensive sense,—Love, the sole law that should govern the moral world, as it does the universe.

For love and life in him were twins
Born at one birth, in every other
First life then love its course begins
Tho' they be children of one mother;
And so thro' this dark world they fleet
Divided till in death they meet,
But he loved all things ever.¹

Love was his very essence. He worshipped Love. He saw personified in all things animate and inanimate, the love that was his being and his bane. He, under the idealism of the spirit of Solitude, in *Alastor*, paints his longing after the discovery of his antetype, the meeting with an understanding capable of clearly estimating the deductions of his own; an imagination which could enter upon, and seize the subtle and delicate peculiarities which he had delighted to cherish and unfold in secret; with a frame, whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite lyres, strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, should vibrate with the vibration of his own, and a combination of all these in such proportion as the type within demands. He thirsted after his likeness—and he found it not,—no bosom that could dive into the fountains of his soul's deep stores, hold intercourse or communion with his soul; the language of all in whom he had expected to meet with these qualities, seemed as of a distant and a savage land,—unintelligible sounds,

¹ *Rosalind and Helen*, 622 *et seq.*

that could make no music to his ear, could awaken no chord of music in his thoughts; when he spoke, words of mute and motionless ice replied to words quivering and burning with the heart's best food. It was with this feeling of despair and disappointment, that he sought in Nature what it had been a vain and fruitless hope to discover among his kind. Yet in Nature, in the solitude of Nature,—in the trees, the flowers, the grass, the waters and the sky, in every motion of the green leaves of spring, there was heard, inaudible to others, a voice that gave back the echo of his own; insensible to others, there was felt a secret correspondence with his self. There was an eloquence in the tongueless wind,

And in the breezes, whether low or loud,
And in the forms of every passing cloud,—¹

in the blue depth of noon, and in the starry night, that bore a mysterious relation to something within him, awakened his spirits to a dance of breathless rapture, and filled his eyes with tears of tenderness. But a time came when the

Mother of this unfathomable world,
as he calls Nature, no longer sufficed to satiate the cravings of her favourite son.

A spirit seemed
To stand beside him, clothed in no bright robes
Of shadowy silver, or enshrining light,
Borrowed from aught the visible world affords,
But undulating woods, and silent well,
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming
Hold commune with him, as if he and it
Were all that was,—only, when his regard
Was raised by intense pensiveness, two eyes,
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought,
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
To beckon him.

¹ Misquoted from *Epipsychidion*, 206-7.

In a poem entitled *Ahasuerus*,¹ I endeavoured, in the character of Julian, adopting often his own language and sentiments, to shadow out this yearning of Shelley's after the ideal; and a few of the lines yet recur to my memory. It is to be hoped the reader will pardon their insertion here.

And momentarily, by day and night,
 The vision of that heavenly maid
 Stood ever by his side, arrayed
 In forms and hues most fair and bright—
 The embodied soul of all that's best
 In Nature, fairest, loveliest,—
 A thing of woods and hills and streams,
 Of plants, and flowers, and rainbow beams,
 "A radiant sister of the day:"
 He saw her when the daylight breaks
 From out the sea's marmoreal bosom;
 He saw her when the sunset streaks
 With lines of gold, leaf, bud, and blossom;
 He saw her in the clouds of even;
 He saw her smile in that of Heaven.
 The lightest breeze, on gentle wing,
 Amid the leaves it scarcely stirs,
 Most musically whispering,
 Recalled that eloquent voice of hers;
 In that divinest solitude,
 He heard it in the murmuring wood;
 And in the rippling of the flood.

¹ Medwin stumbled into a bad muddle here. First he quoted a bit of his own *Ahasuerus*, in which, he says, he adopted often Shelley's "own language and sentiments." Then he thought it appropriate to add a bit of real Shelley (from *To Jane—The Recollection*—very much altered). Thus far the printed *Life* of 1847. Finally, and very shakily, he added in manuscript the four couplets, "All things," &c., by way of foot-note to Shelley's "own exquisite lines," as revised by him to suit the context. He headed his couplets with "to which I

added," and struck the four words out again, no doubt meaning to state the case more clearly and properly—as even he would see the arrogance of the apparent position; and, in this instance, at all events, he clearly had no wish to appropriate Shelley's share of the glory or any portion of it. All he meant, probably, was that Shelley's "own exquisite lines" would be very decorative between two less exquisite passages of Medwin's *Ahasuerus*; but he was "fumbling with his palsied" pen, and did not quite see how to express his meaning.

And thereto might be added his own exquisite lines:—

There seemed, from the remotest seat
 Of the wide ocean's waste,
 To the soft flower beneath his feet,
 A magic circle traced,
 A spirit interfused around,
 A thrilling, silent life :
 To momentary peace it bound
 His mortal spirit's strife ;
 And still he felt the centre of
 The magic circle there,
 Was one fair form that filled with love
 The lifeless atmosphere.*

A review† which has, with a liberality that is unique at the present day, ever stood forward to do justice to the merits of contemporary authors,—disregarding, in so doing, their politics,—says of *Alastor* :—

“The imagery of the poem is chequered with lights and shades, which to the uninitiated seem capriciously painted in a studio, without regard to the real nature of things ; for there is not apparent ‘a system of divine philosophy, like a sun reflecting order on his landscape.’”

If I might be allowed to illustrate this clever remark, I should add,—resembling one of Salvator Rosa's, which near to the eye appears a confused chaos of rocks and trees and water, the most singularly and indiscriminately massed and mingled, but which viewed from a proper point of

* To which I added

All things that dearest loveliest are
 The setting or the rising star
 The azure sky—the emerald earth
 Had lent their charms to give her birth,
 With animated essence lent
 Their every grace and lineament,
 And but concentred to express
 Her individual loveliness.

† *Fraser's Magazine.*

view, forms an harmonious whole in entire keeping with art and with nature.

"This poem," continues the critic, "contains infinite sadness. It is the morbid expression of 'a soul desperate,' to use the beautiful words of Jeremy Taylor, 'by a quick sense of constant infelicity.' As one who has returned from the valley of the dolorous abyss, the reader hears the voice of lamentation wailing for the world's wrong, in accents wild and sweet, but incommunicably strange. It is the outpouring of his own emotions embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the anticipation of a near and approaching death."

At the beginning of May 1816, in company with the two ladies who had been sharers in the joys and sorrows of his former wanderings on the continent, he again took leave of the white cliffs of Albion, and passing through Paris, where he made no stay, followed the same line of country they had traversed nearly two years before, as far as Troyes. There they left the route leading to Neufchatel, and by that which led through Dijon and Dole, arrived at Poligny, and after resting at Champagnolles, a little village situate in the depth of the mountains, entered Switzerland for the second time, by the pass of *Les Rousses*. Such was the state of the road then, that it required the aid of ten men to support the carriage in its descent.

Who that has traversed one of the most uninteresting tracts in Southern Europe, if we take its extent, *La belle France* as it has been *complimentarily* styled, from Paris to the Jura, knows not the delight with which the traveller looks upon the glorious landscape that lies below him, diversified as it is by the crescent of Lake Lemán, its viney shores and cheerful towns, and framed in by the gigantic outline of the Alps, surmounted by the domes and pinnacles of their eternal snows? We may imagine

then, the transport with which Shelley hailed the approach of [*sic*] Geneva. The party took up their quarters at Dejean's, Secheron, then the best hotel, though since eclipsed by the Bourg and so many others in that key to Italy, and yet in position equalled by none, for it lies immediately under the eye of Mont Blanc. "From the meadows," says Shelley,¹ "we see the lovely lake blue as the heavens which it reflects, and sparkling with golden beams. The opposite shore is sloping and covered with vines. Gentlemen's seats are scattered over these banks, behind which rise ridges of black mountains, and towering far above in the midst of the snowy Alps, the highest and queen of all. Such is the view reflected by the Lake. It is a bright summer scene, without any of that sacred solitude and deep seclusion that delighted us at Lucerne."

Lord Byron, attended by his young physician Polidori, was already arrived. The two poets had never met, but were not altogether strangers, for Shelley had sent the author of *Childe Harold* a copy of *Queen Mab* in 1812, soon after its publication; who showed it, he says, "to Mr. Sotheby, as a work of great power;" but the letter accompanying it, strangely enough miscarried.

Shelley, soon after his arrival, wrote a note to the noble lord, detailing at some length the accusations which had been laid against his character, and adding, that if Lord Byron thought those charges were not true, it would make him happy to have the honour of paying him a visit. The answer was such as might be anticipated. There was, in their present meeting at Geneva, no want of disposition towards a friendly acquaintance on both sides.²

¹ This is from the *Six Weeks' Tour*; but it is Mary, not Shelley, who says it, in the first of the *Letters Descriptive* &c., duly signed "M."

² Moore's story, of which this is a paraphrase (Byron's Works, 17 vol. 1832-3, iii. 269), makes it the *Queen Mab* letter that was lost, and gives

After a fortnight's residence at Dejean's, Shelley and his female friends removed to the Campagne Mont Allègre, on the opposite side of the lake; and shortly after, Lord Byron took that of Diodati. This villa had probably been chosen from its association, for the Diodati from whom it derived its name, was a friend of Milton; and the author of *Paradise Lost* had himself, in his way to and from Italy, hallowed it by his abode. The Campagne Mont Allègre, or Chapuis, as it was sometimes called, lay immediately at the foot of Diodati, being only separated from it by a vineyard, and having no other communication but a very tortuous, hedged in, and narrow lane, scarcely admitting of a *char-a-banc*. The spot was one of the most sequestered on the lake, and almost hidden by a grove of umbrageous forest trees, as is a bird's nest among leaves, and invisible from the main road. At the extremity of the terrace, is a secure little port, belonging to the larger villa, and here was moored the boat which formed so much the mutual delight and recreation of the two poets. It was keeled and clinker-built, the only one of the kind on the lake; and which, although Mr. Moore says it "was fitted to stand the usual squalls of the climate," was to my mind ill-adapted for the navigation, for it drew too much water and was narrow and crank. I saw it two years after, lying a wreck, and half submerged, though (like Voltaire's pen, of which hundreds have been sold as original to Englishmen at Ferney) there was at that time a chaloupe at Geneva that went by the name of Byron's. The *real* boat was the joint property of the two poets, and in this frail vessel, Shelley used to brave at

it the sense that, if the charges against Byron should not have been true, he, Shelley, would be

happy to be honoured with Byron's acquaintance. Medwin's version must surely be the right one.

all hours, *Bises* which none of the *barques* could face. These north-easters are terrific; they follow the course of the lake, and increasing in violence as they drive along in blackening gusts, spend themselves at last on the devoted town to which they are real pestilences. Maurice, their Batellier, although a Westminster reviewer denies that they had one, speaking of Shelley, said that "he was in the habit of lying down at the bottom of the vessel, and gazing at Heaven, where he would never enter." I should not have given credit to a Genevese for so much poetry. Byron, Moore says, "would often lean abstracted over the side, and surrender himself up in silence to the absorbing task of moulding his thronging thoughts into shape."¹

Of these water excursions, Shelley used often to speak. To watch the sunset—to see it long after it sunk beneath the horizon of the Jura, glowing in roses on the palaces of snow—to gaze on their portraiture in the blue mirror, till they assumed the paleness of death, and left a melancholy like we feel in parting, though with a certainty of meeting again, with some object of our idolatry—these were some of his delights. The thunder-storms too, that visited them, were grand and terrific in the extreme. "We watch them," says Mrs. Shelley, "as they approach from the opposite side of the lake, observing the lightning play among the clouds in various parts of the heavens, and dart in jagged fissures upon the piney heights of Jura, dark with the shadow of the overhanging cloud, whilst perhaps the sun is shining cheerily on us." "One night," Shelley adds, "we enjoyed a finer storm than I had ever before beheld. The lake was lit up; the pines in Jura

¹ Ib. 271. In this case, although fitted, the sense is not subverted. the words are transposed and re-

made visible, and all the scene illuminated for an instant, when a pitchy blackness succeeded, and the thunder came in frightful gusts over our heads amid the darkness."

It was this very tempest, in all probability, that inspired Lord Byron with the magnificent description so well known in the third canto of *Childe Harold*.

The poets were not always singly, or but companioned by each other, in the boat. Their water excursions were enlivened by the presence of the ladies, and Polidori sometimes made one of the party.

The similarity of the destinies of Shelley and Byron, contributed to cement this their friendship. Both were parted from their children. Both were marks for the world's obloquy; one was self-exiled for ever, the other soon about to be so. Their pursuits were congenial, they had

Been cradled into poetry by wrong,
And learnt by suffering what they taught in song—

or as Göthe has beautifully said

Spät erklingt was früh erklang,
Glück und *Unglück* wird Gesang.

They both sought and found in solitude and nature a balm for their wounded spirits. No wonder, then, that in this absolute retirement, they were so seldom apart. They spent their mornings on the lake, their evenings in their own intellectual circle; and thus, as Byron said, he passed that summer more rationally than at any period of his life. That he profited by the superior reading and refined taste of Shelley, is evident from all he wrote in Switzerland. He had before written for fame—he here was inspired by a nobler sentiment. There is a higher strain of inspiration—a depth of thought and feeling—"a natural piety," in the third canto of *Childe Harold*, which we do not find in any of his previous works, and which may be accounted for

partly, also, by his being *drenched* with Wordsworth, now become one of Shelley's chief favourites; and whom he addresses in a Sonnet as "Poet of Nature." This peaceful quietude—this haven after the storm—this retreat, was more than once disturbed by the physician. He was, Mr. Moore, says, "the son of the secretary to Alfieri," better known as the author of the Italian Grammar in England, where he taught his own language. Dr. Polidori not only conducted himself to his patron in a way that it required all his forbearance to brook, by his ill-timed and sarcastic remarks, but his intemperance shewed itself in a still more overbearing manner to Shelley, which was continually breaking out; and on one occasion, deeming, wrongfully, that Shelley had treated him with contempt, he went so far as to proffer him a sort of challenge, at which Shelley, as might be expected, only laughed. Lord Byron, however, perceiving that the vivacious physician might take further advantage of his friend's known sentiments against duelling, said—"Recollect that though Shelley has scruples about duelling, I have none, and shall be at all times ready to take his place."

But if Polidori was jealous of the daily increasing intimacy between the two poets, he was not less envious of their having assigned to them by the world, superior talents to his own; and which judgment, he endeavoured to prove was unjust, by perpetrating a tragedy. Mr. Moore gives a humorous account of the reading of the production, (of which I have heard Shelley speak,) at Diodati; which Byron, for he was the reader, constantly interlarded with,—“I assure you, when I was on the Drury Lane Committee, much worse things were offered to me;” and yet in a letter to Murray, he afterwards recommends him

to publish this tragedy, with the remark, "*I have never read it*"—a convenient equivocation. In opening the Life of Lord Byron, everywhere similar instances of the treacherousness of his memory, or his love of mystification, may be traced; to which I shall not now refer, but return to the would-be dramatist; and as Mr. Moore, so practised a biographer, has given on many occasions, the histories of those with whom the noble poet had intercourse, I shall here dispose of the doctor.

Dr. Polidori was a middlesized, handsome man, with a marked Italian cast of countenance, which bore the impress of profound melancholy,—a good address and manners, more retiring than forward in general society. He had, after quitting Lord Byron, come to settle at Norwich, in the neighbourhood of which, resided several old Catholic families of distinction, from whom he expected encouragement in his profession; but although he was well received in their houses, he was disappointed in getting practice, and scarcely obtained a fee. Who would have liked to trust their lives in the hands of an M.D. of twenty-two years of age? Perhaps, also, his being a foreigner, and having been a friend of Byron, were no great recommendations in a country town, where bigotry and prejudice (though the Diocesan was free from both, and *par parenthèse*, occasionally received him at his hospitable table,) are nowhere more prevalent,—so that he confirmed Byron's prognostic:

I fear the Doctor's skill at Norwich,
Will never warm the Doctor's porridge.

The disavowal by the noble poet, (with the remark that he would be responsible for no man's dulness but his own,) of *The Vampire*, which in order to obtain a sale for it, Polidori had given out as his late patron's, placed him in

a false position, and disgusted him with himself; or rather, as his friends said, with the world; and in a fit of misanthropy, he published a pamphlet not devoid of talent, entitled, *An Essay on Positive Pleasure*. In this treatise he took a gloomy view of life, and endeavoured to prove, *à la* Rochefoucauld, that friendship and love were mere names, and totally unable to supply the void in the human heart.

The ladies were especially offended at the tenor of the work, which was anything but complimentary to the sex. Soon after its appearance, might be read, and were very extensively read in a Norwich paper, the following lines, written by the son of no mean poet—nor are they deficient in point—under the signature, though the initials are inaccurately transposed, of “A. S.”

When gifted Harold left his ruined home,
With mourning lyre through foreign realms to roam;
When he, the giant genius, stalked abroad,
Blasting the flowers that blossomed on his road;
Confessed no joy in hope—no light in life,
But all was darkness, vanity, and strife;
Yet would his better feeling sometimes move
That icy bosom with one touch of love:
None could, like him, with glowing verse essay
“To fix the spark of Beauty’s heavenly ray;”
None could, like him, so warmly—deeply feel,
How female softness moulds a heart of steel.
But thou—weak follower of a soulless school!
Whose stoic feelings vacillate by rule,
Doomed through a joyless wilderness to rove,
Uncheered by friendship, and unwarmed by love.
Dull, satiate spirit! ere thy prime’s begun,
Accurst with hating what thou canst not shun;
Man shall despise thee for thy vain attempt,
And woman spurn thee with deserved contempt;
Thy pride of apathy, thy folly see,
And what we *hate* in Harold—*loathe* in thee.

Then followed an intemperate reply by Polidori to this severe, though not altogether unmerited satire, for he was the very ape of Byron, addressed to the author, with false supposition of the authorship, which in the next Journal was contradicted by the aspersed individual. This caused a long letter from some friend of Polidori's, ending with, "Doff that lion's hide, &c." This last effusion occasioned an answer from the young poet, in which he expresses a doubt which most to admire, the *aptness* of the quotation, the *shrewdness* of the conjecture, the eloquence of the rhetoric, or the amiable forbearance of the writer. S. A., however, preserved his incognito, and being a stranger on a short visit to Norwich—a young man about to enter into orders—the mystery was strictly kept.

It may be added that this A. S. was the son of the poet William Spencer—and is well known in the fashionable world for his occasional verses—which have found a place in many a young lady's album, especially those to the Duchess of Rutland paraphrased from a rare sonnet of Tasso's.

Whether this satire was calculated, or not, to injure Polidori's prospects, is a question; but that it led to the well-known result, which ended his career, is not probable. He made an attempt to destroy himself at Diōdati, and as Lord Byron said, was always compounding poisons with a view of having at hand the most subtle and speedy means of extinguishing life. Suicide seems with him to have been an *idée fixe*. It is also *said*, that, like most Italians, he was very susceptible of the tender passion; that he had fallen desperately and hopelessly in love. The object of his passion was the beautiful and accomplished daughter of a catholic gentleman of rank, and there was some romance in the story, for which, however,

I will not vouch. Polidori upset his gig at the entrance of the Park, and broke his leg, and being unable to be removed further than the house, remained there during his illness. This attachment was a preposterous one, and could but lead to disappointment; but that it preyed upon his mind, and brought about the fatal catastrophe, I cannot credit. He had an ill-regulated mind, which if properly directed, might have rendered him a useful member of his profession, and society. Such was at least the opinion of Lord Byron. Shelley, I have heard often speak of Polidori, but without any feeling of ill-will.¹

A friend of mine, who occasionally made a morning call at Diodati, says that he met one day there a youth apparently not seventeen,—such was his boyish exterior,—but in whose conversation there was nothing of the boy. He was surprised as he compared his words and looks together, at the contrast,—astonished at the subtilty of his remarks, the depth of his information, and the deference Lord Byron seemed to pay to him. It was Shelley. This juvenile appearance he never lost.

During his stay at Poligny, he formed no acquaintance with the Genevans. He had not had sufficient opportunities of rightly estimating their character, when he says, that “there is more equality of classes than in England.” Nowhere did at that time castes prevail to such an extent. No talent, no wealth, no merit could break down the

¹ Those who desire Polidori “of more acquaintance” should refer to Mr. Rossetti’s recent volume, *The Diary of | Dr. John William Polidori | 1816 | Relating to Byron, Shelley, etc. | Edited and Elucidated by | William Michael Rossetti | London | Elkin Mathews | 1911.* His portrait by Gainsford, given to the National Portrait Gallery by

Mr. Rossetti, his nephew, is reproduced in *Some Reminiscences of that nephew* (2 vol., Brown Langham & Co., 1906); and he figures, sketchily, in the *Rossetti Papers* of the same distinguished editor (Sands & Co., 1903), as well as in *Shelley and his Friends in Italy*, by Helen Rossetti Angeli, published by Methuen & Co. in 1911.

barrier of birth—yes! strange enough, as in the republic of the Nairs, a female could ennoble. If she made a *mésalliance*, she could elevate her husband into sufferance, but if a patrician married a plebeian, he was for ever excluded from society, a *muris athenicus* was raised against him, that nothing could break down. The *rue basse* and the *Treille* might as well attempt to form a junction. Lord Byron knew the Genevese better than Shelley: he knew they courted him, not because he was a poet, but because he was a lord. Nobility being the golden calf at which, like most republicans, they fall down and worship.

Among the most interesting of Shelley's prose remains, is the account given of the *tour du lac*, which he made in company with Byron,—Mary W. Godwin and Miss C[lairmont] being, I should suppose, of the party. The *Nouvelle Heloise*, which he styles, “an overflowing of sublimest genius, and more than mortal sensibility,” was his *Manuel de Voyage*. The scene so graphically painted by Rousseau, Clarens, the Rochet [*sic*] de Julie, and especially Meillerie, awakened in him all his poetical enthusiasm, and were to him haunted ground, an enchanted land. The Savoy side of the lake, which they coasted, and where they disembarked, particularly pleased him; and lovely it indeed is! “Groves of pine, chesnuts, and walnuts, overshadow it; magnificent and unbounded forests, to which England has no parallel—for in the midst of the woods, are indeed dells of lawny expanse, immeasurably verdant, adorned with a thousand of the rarest flowers and odorous with thyme.” During this excursion, which at least is not unattended with danger in such a craft as they possessed—totally unfitted, from its drawing too much water, and other causes, for the purpose—they were nearly lost. “The wind increased in violence,” he says, “till it blew

tremendously, and as it came from the remotest extremity of the lake, produced waves of frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam. One of our boatmen, who was a dreadfully stupid fellow, persisted in holding the sail, [at a time] when the boat was in danger of being driven under water by the hurricane. On discovering his error he let it entirely go, and the boat for a moment refused to obey the helm; in addition, the rudder was so broken as to render the management of it very difficult. One wave fell in, and then another."

Shelley never showed more nobleness of character, disinterestedness, and presence of mind, than on this trying occasion.

Byron, in one of his letters, says,

"We were in the boat,—imagine five in such a boat. The sail was mismanaged—the boat filling fast. He (Shelley) can't swim.—I slipped off my coat, made him slip off his, and take hold of an oar, telling him I thought, being an expert swimmer, I could save him, if he would not struggle when he kept hold of me; unless we got smashed against the rocks, which were high, and sharp, with an arched roof on them at that minute. We were then about a hundred yards from shore, and the boat in great peril. He answered me with great coolness, that he had no notion of being saved, and that I should have enough to do to save myself."

Shelley, in speaking of this scene, says:

"I felt in this near prospect of death, a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered, [though] but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful, had I been alone, but I knew that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might have been risked to save [*sic* for *preserve*] mine."

This scene occurred off the rocks of Meillerie, and Byron remarked,—“It would have been very classical to have gone to the bottom there, but not very agreeable.”

On visiting Clarens, Shelley, thinking of the loves of

St. Preux and Julie, says,—“ Why did the cold maxims of the world compel me, at this moment, to repress the tears of melancholy transport, which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects that excited them ? ” At Lausanne, whilst walking on the acacia-shaded terrace of Gibbon’s house, and which the historian of the “ Rise [*sic*] and Fall ” had so often paced, he observes : “ Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now, that Julie and Clarens, Lausanne, and the Roman Empire, compel me to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon.”

On their return from this store of memories for after days, Lord Byron was visited by “ Monk ” Lewis, that strange and eccentric genius, who met with so unsentimental a death—exhaustion by sea-sickness. Lewis’s love of the wild and marvellous, which he had imbibed from the legends of Germany, where he had travelled in early life, communicated itself in some degree to his companions, and they were in the habit of passing their evenings in narrating ghost stories, in which, as it may be supposed, Lewis distinguished himself the most ; and told, among many others, that of Minna, which first appeared in the *Conversations of Lord Byron* ; and one also sketched there, which is more stirring, of a haunted house, at Mannheim, which he had inhabited, that had belonged to a widow, who to prevent the marriage of her only son with a poor but honest maiden, had sent him to sea, where he perished in a wreck. Remorse and sorrow for her irreparable loss, and the reproaches of the girl, crazed the mother’s brain, and whose occupation became turning over the pages of newspapers, in order to find tidings of him. At last she

died of a broken heart, and continued her employment after her death, which accounted for Lewis's hearing every night at a certain hour, as he lay in bed, the rustling and crackling of paper. What an admirable subject for a ballad! The anecdote was communicated to me from a memorandum taken down after an evening at Diodati.

Shelley's imagination, excited by this, and other tales, told with all the seriousness that marked a conviction of belief—though it seems from Mr. Moore, that the author of *The Monk* placed no faith in the magic wonders he related,—one evening produced a singular scene. Shelley had commenced a story, and in the midst of it, worked up to an extraordinarily painful pitch, was compelled to break the thread of his narration, by a hasty retreat. Some of the party followed him, and found him in a trance of horror, and when called upon after it was overpast, to explain the cause, he said that he had had a vision of a beautiful woman, who was leaning over the balustrade of a staircase, and looking down on him with four eyes, two of which were in the centre of her uncovered breasts. Proving that he had not forgotten this vision—in *The Witch of Atlas*, he after made use of the epithet *bosom-eyed*.

It appears from Mr. Moore, that *The Vampire*, the fragment of which was afterwards published among Byron's works, had been sketched previously to "Monk" Lewis's arrival, and that the same *soiree* [*sic*] gave rise to *Frankenstein*.

The creation of a man-monster is to be found in Paracelsus, though by a very different process from that which suggested itself to the mind of Mrs. Shelley. This wild and wonderful romance, which has furnished a subject for the stage, not only in England, but in France, has been

quoted in parliament, and whose hero has become a by-word, was one of those conceptions that take hold of the public mind at once and for ever. It was an astonishing effort of genius in a person of her age,—for she was scarcely nineteen. I have heard it asserted that the idea was Shelley's, and that he assisted much in the development of the plot; but there is no good ground for this supposition. The best proof of the contrary, is his review of the novel,¹ which no one who knew him would accuse him of having written, had he had any share in the authorship; and as that admirable piece of criticism is not included, from modesty, doubtless, on the part of Mrs. Shelley, among his Prose Works, I shall give the greater part of it a place here.

“The novel of *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, is undoubtedly, as a mere story, one of the most complete and original productions of the day. We debate with ourselves in wonder, as we read it, what could have been the series of thoughts, what could have been the peculiar experiences that awakened them,—which conduced in the author's mind, to the astonishing combinations of motives and incidents, and the startling catastrophe, which compose this tale. There are, perhaps, some points of subordinate importance, which prove that it is the author's first attempt. But in this judgment, which requires a very nicé discrimination, we may be mistaken; for it is conducted throughout with a firm and steady hand. The interest gradually accumulates, and advances towards the conclusion, with the accelerated rapidity of a rock rolled down a mountain. We are led breathless with suspense and sympathy, and the heaping up of incident on incident, and the working of passion out of passion. We cry ‘hold—hold, enough!’ but yet there is something to come;

¹ The “best proof”—and none better could be wanted—is the explicit statement which Mary Shelley herself had made in 1831 when republishing *Frankenstein* as one of Bentley's “Standard Novels.” In the introduction to that issue of her book she says: “I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident,

nor scarcely of one train of feeling, to my husband, and yet but for his incitement, it would never have taken the form in which it was presented to the world. From this declaration I must except the preface. As far as I can recollect, it was entirely written by him.” For fuller information, see the Appendix.

and like the victim, whose history it relates, we think we can bear no more, and yet more is to be borne. Pelion is heaped on Ossa, and Ossa on Olympus. We climb Alp upon Alp, until the horizon is seen, blank, vacant, and limitless; and the head turns giddy, and the ground seems to fail under our feet.

"This novel rests its claim on being a source of powerful and profound emotion. The elementary feelings of the human mind are exposed to view, and those who are accustomed to reason deeply on their origin and tendency, will perhaps be the only persons who can sympathise, to the full extent, in the interest of the actions which are their result. But founded on nature as they are, there is perhaps no reader who can endure any thing besides a mere love story, who will not feel a responsive string touched in his inmost soul. The sentiments are so affectionate and innocent, the characters of the subordinate agents in this strange drama are clothed in the light of such a mild and gentle mind. The pictures of domestic manners are of the most simple and attaching character; the pathos is irresistible and deep. Nor are the crimes and malevolence of the single Being, though indeed withering and tremendous, the offspring of any unaccountable propensity to evil, but flow irresistibly from certain causes fully adequate to their production. They are all children as it were of Necessity and Human Nature. In this the direct moral of the book consists, and it is perhaps the most important and the most universal application of any moral that can be enforced by example. Treat a person ill, and he will become wicked. Requite affection with scorn; let one being be selected, for whatsoever cause, as the refuse of his kind,—divide him, a social being, from society, and you impose upon him the irresistible obligations, malevolence and selfishness. It is thus that too often in society, those who are best qualified to be its benefactors and its ornaments, are branded by some accident with scorn; and changed by neglect and solitude of heart into a scourge and a curse.

"The Being in *Frankenstein* is no doubt a tremendous creature. It was impossible that he should not have received among men that treatment which led to the consequences of his being a social nature. He was an abortion and an anomaly, and though his mind was such as its first impressions framed it, affectionate and full of moral sensibility, yet the circumstances of his existence are so monstrous and uncommon, that, when the consequences of them became developed in action, his original goodness was gradually turned into misanthropy and revenge. The scene between the Being and the blind De Lacey in the cottage, is one of the most profound and

extraordinary instances of passion that we ever recollect. It is impossible to read this dialogue, and indeed many others of a somewhat similar nature, without feeling the heart suspend its pulsations with wonder, and the 'tears stream down the cheeks.' The rencounter and arguments between Frankenstein and the Being on the sea of ice,* almost approaches, in effect, to the expostulations of *Caleb Williams* with *Falkland*. It reminds us, indeed, somewhat of the style and character of that admirable writer, to whom the author has dedicated his work, and whose productions he seems to have studied.

"There is only one instance, however, in which we detect the least approach to imitation, and that is, the conduct of the incident of Frankenstein's landing in Ireland. The general character of the tale indeed resembles nothing that ever preceded it. After the death of Elizabeth, the story, like a stream which grows at once more rapid and profound as it proceeds, assumes an irresistible solemnity, and the magnificent energy and swiftness of a tempest.

"The churchyard scene, in which Frankenstein visits the tombs of his family; his quitting Geneva, and his journey through Tartary, to the shores of the Frozen Ocean, resemble at once the terrible reanimation of a corpse, and the supernatural career of a spirit. The scene in the cabin of Walton's ship—the more than mortal enthusiasm and grandeur of the Being's speech over the dead body of his victim, is an exhibition of intellectual and imaginative power, which we think the reader will acknowledge has never been surpassed."

I mistook Byron's words,¹ when he said he made a tour of the lake with Shelley and Hobhouse. He must have alluded to his voyage on two different occasions. That with Mr. Hobhouse occurred at a later period. I might have known, had I reflected on the circumstance, that it could not have taken place in company with Shelley; for Hobhouse, of whom more hereafter, was one of Shelley's most inveterate enemies, and never ceased to poison Lord Byron's mind against him, being jealous of

* Chamisso owes much in his *Peter Schlemihl* to this novel, especially in this part of the catastrophe.

¹ I have not hunted up the precise the simplicity of the admission is fairy-tale here retracted. Even characteristic.

the growing intimacy of the two poets, and thinking with Gay, that

friendship is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame,

—Number One being with him all in all.

With Shelley, Byron disagreed in many essential points, but they never came to a difference, which was the case with few of his pseudo friends. Mr. Hobhouse and himself were always best apart, and it was a relief to him when they finally parted, not on the best terms, in Greece. A cold, uncongenial, mathematical pedant, like Hobhouse, could have little in common with Byron. But Shelley was an *Eldorado*, an inexhaustible mine. Byron (as in the case of Charles Skinner Matthews, of whom he used to talk so much, and regretted too so deeply) not being, though he pretends to have been a great reader, or¹ a great thinker, liked the company of those who were, for thus he obtained both the matter and spirit through the alembic of others' brains. His admiration of Shelley's talents and acquirements only yielded to an esteem for his character and virtues; and to have past a day without seeing him, would have seemed a lost day. No wonder, then, that in this absolute retirement, they were inseparable.

Shelley used to say, that reading Dante produced in him despair. Might not also the third Canto of *Childe Harold*, and *Manfred*, have engendered a similar feeling, for he wrote little at Geneva. He read incessantly. His

¹ It is not certain whether the insertion of this *or*, supplied in the author's revised copy, really brings out Medwin's thought as well as the first reading, from which the *or* was absent: he may have meant that, though Byron pretended to be

a great reader, he was not a great thinker; or he may have meant that Byron pretended to be a great reader and a great thinker, but was neither. Medwin's punctuation was often so lax that it did not help his meaning over the stile.

great studies at this time were the Greek dramatists, especially Æschylus's *Prometheus*, whom he considered the type of Milton's Satan. He translated this greatest of tragedies to Byron, a very indifferent Greek scholar, which produced his sublime ode on Prometheus, and occasionally rendered for him passages out of *Faust*, which it appears "Monk" Lewis afterwards entirely translated to him, and from which Göthe assumes *Manfred* to be taken; but in the treatment of the subject I can find no trace of plagiarism. Byron, with more reason and justice, retorted on Göthe such a charge; and he might have added, that Margaret's madness, as I have heard Shelley observe, bore a strong resemblance to Ophelia's; and that the song, "*Mein Mutter*," * &c., is a bad version of *Mactuel Borne*, "the Holly-tree," which runs thus:

Mein Moder de mi schlacht,
 Mein fater de mi att,
 Mein Swister, de Mädköniken,
 Söcht alle meine Beeniken.¹

* Since translated by Mr. Hayward,—translated? travestied, I should say,—thus:

My mother, the whore, she was the death of me;
 My father, the rogue, he ate me up;
 My little sister picked up the bones at a cool place;
 There I became a beautiful wood-bird.
 Fly away! fly away!

¹ It seems best to leave this mess as it was left by the author, who made no attempt to clean it up when he was revising the book. Hayward's translation, in the editions of 1834 and 1847, renders Goethe's version of the song thus:—

My mother, the whore,
 That killed me!
 My father, the rogue,
 That ate me up!
 My little sister
 Picked up the bones
 At a cool place!

There I became a beautiful little wood-bird.

Fly away! fly away!

This Hayward annotates learnedly as "founded on a popular German story, to be found in the *Kinder- und Haus-Märchen* of the distinguished brothers Grimm, under the title of *Van den Machandel-Boom*, and in the English selection from that work (entitled *German Popular Stories*) under the title of *The Juniper Tree*." He tells how the murdered girl was changed into a beautiful bird,

At the end of July, Shelley and his companions made an excursion to Chamouni. At sight of the Mont Blanc, as they approached it from Savoy, he exclaims:—"I never imagined what mountains were before. The immensity of their aerial summits excited, when they first burst upon me, a sentiment of ecstatic wonder, not unallied with madness; and remember," he adds, in the letter to his friend, "this was one scene, though it passed home to our regard and our imagination. Though it embraced a vast extent of space, the snowy pyramids which shot into the blue sky, seemed to overhang our path; the ravine clothed with giant pines, and black with its depths below, so deep, that the very roaring of the untameable Arve, which rolled through it, could not be heard above. All was as much our own, as if we had been creators of such impressions in the minds of others, as now occupied our own. Nature was the poet, whose harmony held our spirits more breathless than that of the divinest."

Of the *Mer de Glace*, he says,—

"I will not pursue Buffon's grand, but gloomy theory, that this globe that we inhabit, will at some future period be changed into a mass of frost, by the encroachments of the polar ice, and of that produced on the most elevated parts of the earth. Imagine to your-

which flies about, singing—

Min Moder de mi slacht't,
Min Vader de mi att,
Min Swester de Marleenken
Söcht alle mine Beeniken,
Un bindt sie in een syden Dook,
Legts unner den Machandelboom;
Kywitt! Kywitt! ach watt en
schön Vagel bin ich!

The literal translation, adds Hayward, would be—

My mother who slew me,
My father who ate me,
My sister Mary Anne
Gathers all my bones

And binds them up in a silk handkerchief,
Lays them under the juniper tree.
Kywitt! Kywitt! ah what a beautiful bird am I.

Medwin's transformation of the low German *Machandel Boom* (Juniper-tree) into the wondrous proper name *Mactuadel Borne* is the less excusable in that the gallant captain actually had the passage under his eye and hand when making his revision; for he supplied two umlauts with a pen to convert *Madkoniken* (1st edition) into the *Mädköniken* of the present text.

self, Ahriman seated among the desolating snows, among these palaces of death and frost, so sculptured in their terrible magnificence by the adamantine hand of necessity ; and that he casts around him, as the first essays of his final usurpation, torrents, rocks, and glaciers ; at once proofs and symbols of his reign ; add to this, the degradation of the human species, who in these regions are half deformed and idiotic ; and most of whom are deprived of any thing that can excite interest or admiration. This is a part of the subject more mournful than sublime ; but such as neither the painter nor the philosopher should disdain to regard."

Before, however, leaving Chamouni, after visiting the source of the Arveiron, the stream of poetry was unlocked from his breast, and he composed his address to Mont Blanc, written under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects it attempts to describe,—“lines that rest their claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the wildness and sublimity from which they sprung.” The language is Titanic. It is a legion of wild thoughts, a scene that makes the brain of the reader dizzy, and his flesh creep to contemplate ; so truthful is the picture, so naturally do the gigantic ideas that belong to it, arise, that Prometheus might have thus apostrophised on the Caucasus.

His *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, commenced during his voyage round the Lake with Lord Byron, was also one of the fruits of his residence at Geneva.

As this poem embodies his peculiar tenets,—system, I might say,—I shall endeavour to shew that it is evidently derived from Plato, with whose *Symposium* he had been long familiar, but only appears to have commenced translating at Leghorn, in June, 1818. That ode is indeed a comment on the *Symposium*, as will appear by the discourse therein, of Socrates on Love. He says,

“What do you imagine to be the aspect of the Supreme Beauty itself, simple, pure, uncontaminated by the intermixture of human

flesh, and colours, and all other idle and unreal shapes, attendant on humanity? The Monoeidic Beauty itself! What must be the life of him who dwells upon, and gazes on that which it becomes us to seek! Think you not, that to him alone is accorded the prerogative of bringing forth, not images or shadows of virtue, for he is in contact, not with a shadow but with reality, with virtue itself, in the production and nourishment of which he becomes dear to the gods; and if such a privilege is conceded to any human being, immortal."

In another part of this wonderful piece of eloquence, Socrates goes on to say,—

"Man would by such contemplations learn to consider the beauty which was in souls, more excellent than that which was in form," and adds, "he would thus conduct his pupil to science, so that he might look upon the loveliness of wisdom; and that contemplating thus the *Universal Beauty*, no longer would he unworthily and meanly enslave himself to the attractions of one form in love, nor one subject of discipline in science; but would turn towards the wide ocean of *Intellectual Beauty*, and from the sight of the lovely and majestic forms which it contains, would abundantly bring forth its conceptions in philosophy, until, strengthened and confirmed, he should at length steadily contemplate one science, which is the science of *Intellectual Beauty*." . . . "Perfect intelligence results in perfect Love. By Love I mean that kindly consideration for others implied in the Christian precept. It is the direct contrary of Selfishness. There is no Virtue which is not included in this Love, whilst Love itself is included in Intelligence. Perfect Intelligence viewed passively implies the quality of knowing all things and the power of doing all things. Viewed actively, it is Love—thus every act of perfect Intelligence is good because it is errorless because it is right—hence active Intelligence is Love *Intelligence is the first principle of all things*; it absorbs everything in its own being, it is more than Justice, more than Mercy, more than Benevolence, more than Morality, more than religion inasmuch as what is meant by these—all that is good in these is included in the ever-living all diverting all absorbing sole existing principle Intelligence—Intelligence is therefore the First great Cause or Deity, and every act of Deity which is of necessity errorless is Love, and this all embracing Love is Happiness."¹

Lord Byron seems, while at Geneva, to have been

¹ These extracts from Shelley's translation of *The Banquet* are more laxly treated than even those from the *Six Weeks' Tour* ending on p. 163.

imbued with similar conceptions, doubtless due to Shelley, and which were more fully inculcated during their lake excursion. In a note to *Childe Harold*, we find,

“The feeling with which all around Clarens, and the opposite shores of Meillerie is invested, is of a higher and a more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion. It is the sense of the existence of Love in its most extended and sublime capacity, and of our participation in its good and its glory. It is the great principle of the universe, which is the more condensed, but not less manifold; and of which, though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality, and mingle in the beauty of the whole.”

This passage bears strong internal evidence of having been dictated, if not written, by Shelley, for Lord Byron was, with the bulk of mankind, a believer in the existence of matter and spirit, which Shelley so far refined, upon the theory of Berkley, as to superadd thereto some abstraction, of which, not as a substitute for Deity, according to Mr. Moore, but as a more exalted idea of the attributes of Deity, the bishop never dreamed; thus differing from the Pantheism of Wordsworth and Coleridge, inasmuch, as on the deification of Nature, found in their early works, Shelley built a deeper and more ethereal philosophy, rendering not only the whole creation into spirit, but worshipping it under the idealism of Intellectual Beauty and Universal Love. And speaking of the Lakists, so successfully imitated by Lord Byron in his third canto of *Childe Harold*, for he was not very particular from whom he borrowed, Shelley,

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,

resolved in the words of Chapman “not to stand on other men’s legs” or to tread in their steps, but to work out for himself, if not a new, certainly an untried system in poetry, which he had conceived at Oxford, on reading Plato—from a translation, Mr. Hogg says, before he could master

the original; a system not built on nonentities, as styled by Mr. Moore, with his materialist ideas, but the types of *Him* who is all beauty and love—types that are brought home to every deeply thinking mind—a system whose elements are the most comprehensive and spirit-stirring, and to which he ever remained true. Well might he say,—

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
 To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?
 I call the phantasms of a thousand hours,
 Each from his voiceless grave—they have in visioned bowers,
 Of studious zeal, or love's delight,
 Outwatched me with the envious night.
 They know that never joy illumed my brow,
 Unlinked with hope; that thou wouldst free
 This world from its dark slavery;
 That thou, O, *Awful Loveliness!*
 Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

Schiller (and it may be fanciful, but I have often, with the Hindoos, and their great law-giver, Menu, who places great faith in names, thought it a singular coincidence, that three of the greatest poets, Shakspeare, Schiller, and Shelley, should all have theirs commencing with a syllable so indicative, (according to Hemstrins and Walter Whiter, the two profoundest philologists,) of force. Schiller I say made the basis of his philosophy that of Kant; and dry and abstract as that philosophy is, he, with his great genius, contrived to interweave it into his mighty lyrics, and to turn mathematics into poetry. His *Ideale und Das Leben*, is a proof of the marvellous faculty he possessed of making reality subservient to imagination, and I cannot help thinking that Shelley was well acquainted with this, and other of the odes on which his system is based. Indeed, the spirit of his *Æsthetics* has somewhat, though not so much, of the daring of Schiller.

Aber flüchtet aus der Sinne Schranken,
In die Freiheit der Gedanken.
 &c. &c.

Mit der Menschen Widerstand, verschwindet
Auch des Gottes Majestät.

What is this but,

Till human hearts might kneel alone,
Each before the judgment throne
Of its own aweless soul?

And is not

Wenn ihr in der Menschheit traurigen Blossen,
Steht vor des Gesetzes Grösse,—

Till in the *nakedness* of false and true,
We stand before our Lord, each to receive his due!

The twelfth stanza of **The Ideal and Actual*, in which Humanity appeals against the will of Heaven—a stanza audacious in its language as that of a fallen Satan,—has more than one reflex in passages of Shelley's earlier

* When in the nakedness of False and True,
Before the Law, to meet your due

You stand; when Guilt draws nigh the Holy One,
Before Truth's lightning arrows then turn pale;
Before the Ideal let your virtue quail,

In shame of deeds your conscience well might shun.
This goal has never reached one mortal man,

To cross that whirlpool has no boat been found,
That wide abyss no bridge can span,

No anchor reach the unfathomable ground.

But for the trammels of the senses, change
Free thoughts, and as they boundless range,

The fearful vision will be chased and flown,
And that eternal whirlpool yawn no more:

Wrestle with Godhead by your will's own power,
And hurl him from his universal throne.

The fetters of the law are strong to bind

But slaves, the scorn of him the good and free,
Who by the might of his own mind

Can set at nought Jove's dreaded majesty. [over.

works, that breathe all the sublimity of Prometheus, when, bound upon Caucasus, he neither repented his deed nor confessed his wrong. Such outbursts in suffering—and who had suffered more from the world's wrong than Schiller—are perhaps worthier of Carl Moor than a philosopher; but to poets it may be allowed to dare all things, and not a voice has ever been raised against Schiller by any of his country's critics, on account of the boldness of this, or other of his lyrical productions. In the present state of society, from the imperfection of education, they are harmless speculations, and no more intelligible to the bulk of mankind than the systems of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, whose theories are a boundless and troubled ocean, where the navigator is continually fancying that the clouds in the distance are islands of the blest, till he approaches, and finds them but a congregation of vapours. Yet still he sails on with the prospect of land, ever buoyed up with hopes which he cannot renounce, though they are constantly frustrated,—theories that lead to no other result than scepticism; and hence, the last of these so-called philosophers, carries on the arguments of his predecessors *ad absurdum*, obliged to assume, that Being and No Being are the same, a verbal sophistry in itself feeble, but as a specimen of logic, pitiable. Well then might Fichte's pupil, Schelling, say,

If pangs humanity wrestles with in vain,
 Coil round thee—if it clasp and strain
 Like Priam's son, in its despair, the snakes,
 Let man revolt against the will of Heaven,
 Shake with its loud lament its vault, till riven
 Each feeling breast with tenderest pity aches.
 Let Nature's fearful voice victorious rise,—
 Make pale the cheek of joy with anguish deep,
 Till bending downwards from the skies,
 In holy sympathy the Immortals weep.

that "Philosophy commences where common sense terminates."

The train of ideas by which these misty Transcendentalists arrive at such deductions, would require a volume to trace; but it may be added, that these vain abstractions have plunged many a disciple of the Berlin school in the ocean of doubt and perplexity, and peopled many a madhouse with victims.

In this account of Shelley's three months residence at Geneva, I cannot pass over in silence a circumstance that occurred there,—Lord Byron's *liaison* with Miss Clara C—— a near connection,—not, as Mr. Moore says, a near relative—of Mrs. Shelley. I remember her in 1820, living *en pension* at Florence, then twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age.¹ She might have been mistaken for an Italian, for she was a *brunette* with very dark hair and eyes. Her history was then a profound secret, but as it has been told by Lord Byron's historian, may find a place here without any indiscretion on my part. As she possessed considerable accomplishments—spoke French and Italian, particularly the latter, with all its *nuances* and niceties—she was much courted by the Russian coterie, a numerous and fashionable one in that city. Though not strictly handsome at that time, for she had had much to struggle with, and mind makes its ravages in the fairest, most, she was engaging and pleasing, and possessed an *esprit de société* rare among our countrywomen. From her personal appearance at that time, I should conceive, that when Byron formed an intimacy with her at Geneva in 1816, she must have been

¹ Claire Clairmont's age is a little over-stated: she was born in 1798. While criticizing Moore's use of the

word *relation*, he describes Mary and Claire as sisters and half-sisters within a few lines. See next page.

strikingly handsome. It has been supposed that his sonnets to Genevra was intended for her ; but it was not so, for altho' they are dated erroneously in December 1813, they were in reality written in Switzerland, which he only reached in 1816, and are universally attributed to have been addressed to her sister, Miss Godwin, who was not pleased at the allusion to the Magdalen of Guido tho' indeed there was nothing to offend, for the comparison was only applied *poetically* to that lady, and complementarily ending with

Such seemest thou—but much more excellent
With nought remorse can claim—nor virtue scorn.

Miss C[lairmont] was not altogether a stranger to Byron when they met at Sècheron ; for, as he was about to quit London for the continent, in the spring of that year, after his mysterious repudiation by Lady Byron, she had an interview with him, for the purpose of obtaining an engagement at Drury Lane, where I have no doubt she would have distinguished herself as an actress ; but which object, his recent resignation of office as chairman of the committee of management, precluded him, as he explained to her, from forwarding. She had accompanied the Shelleys, on this their tour, and passed the summer with them at Mont Allègre ; and here it was that Byron's acquaintance with this lady was renewed. I do not accuse him of any systematic seduction as regards Miss C[lairmont]. She was of a fearless and independent character ; despised the opinion of the world, looking upon the law of marriage as of human invention, having been as early as her half-sister imbued with the doctrines of Mary Wollstonecraft, and entertaining high notions of the rights of women. The sex are fond of rakes : a strange infatuation ! It is said that Byron's attentions

were irresistible; and when they were enhanced by verses, the very essence of *feeling*, Clara's fall could not be doubtful. I have reason to believe, however, that this intrigue was carried on with the greatest secrecy; and that neither the Shelleys nor Polidori were for a long time privy to it: perhaps also, it arose out of some momentary frailty and impulse, from some fatal "importunity and opportunity," in which the senses rather than the heart were engaged—a momentary intoxication, that the dictates of returning reason cooled into indifference on both sides.

The mystery, however, could not be kept—even if at the latter end of August—they landed, I think, in England, on the 6th of September—it was one; for the mystery *soon revealed itself*. She gave birth in due time, to a daughter, who was called Allegra, from Mont Allègre.

Some foul and infamously calumnious slander, relating to this *accouchement*, gave rise to the dark insinuations afterwards thrown out in *The Quarterly Review*, by the writer of the critique on *The Revolt of Islam*, where the lampooner says, at the conclusion of the article, "If we might withdraw the veil of private life, and tell all we know about Shelley, it would be indeed a disgusting picture that we should exhibit; but it would be an unanswerable comment to our text," for "it is not easy for those who read only, to conceive how much low [pride, how much cold] selfishness, how much unmanly cruelty, are consistent with the laws of this 'universal' and 'lawless love'."

This prying into private life, and founding on senseless gossip, such foul and infamous accusations, was unworthy of the most scurrilous of those weekly journals that pander to the evil passions of society; but most disgraceful to a review of so high a character as the

Quarterly. Shelley had been, however, as I have mentioned above, long before the appearance of this article, a victim to the scandal, for it was, if I remember right, promulgated by Polidori in the Preface to his *Vampyre*.¹ Shelley, with his contempt of the world's opinion, where he felt a consciousness of no wrong, as far as regarded this unfortunate connexion, bore the obloquy unflinchingly, rather than divulge what he had given his word to Lord Byron to conceal. Allegra, when a few months old, was carried by a Swiss nurse, and delivered to Lord Byron, then at Venice.

No part of Lord Byron's conduct is more enigmatical than his neglect of this interesting young woman; and the reason of his making no settlement on the mother of his child, after withdrawing it from her care, is one of the problems I leave others to solve. I often heard him speak of Allegra as recorded in the *Conversations*. It is to her Shelley alludes in his *Julian and Maddalo*, where he says, that whilst waiting in his palace for its lord,

With his child he played ;
 A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made,
 A serious, subtle—wild, yet gentle being ;
 Graceful without design, and unforeseeing ;
 With eyes—Oh speak not of her eyes, they seem
 Twin mirrors of Italian heavens—yet gleam
 With such deep meaning, as we never see
 But in the human countenance. With me
 She was a special favourite. I had nursed
 Her fine and feeble limbs, when she came first
 To this bleak world ; and yet she seemed to know
 On second sight, her ancient playfellow ;
 For after the first shyness was worn out,
 We sate there rolling billiard balls about,
 When the Count entered.²

¹ As to Polidori, see note *ante*,
 p. 152.

² *Julian and Maddalo*, less altered
 than usual : see lines 142 *et seq.*

A regard for children, singular and touching, is an unerring and most engaging indication of a benevolent mind.

"That this characteristic was not wanting in Shelley, might be demonstrated," says his friend Hogg, "by numerous examples, that crowd upon recollection, each of them bearing the strongly impressed stamp of individuality; for genius renders every surrounding circumstance significant and important. In one of our rambles we were traversing the bare, squalid, ugly, corn-yielding country, that lies, if I remember rightly, to the south-west. The hollow road ascended a hill, and near the summit, Shelley observed a female child leaning against the bank on the right. It was of a mean, dull, and unattractive aspect, and older than its stunted growth denoted. The little girl was oppressed with cold, by hunger, and by a vague feeling of abandonment. It was not easy to draw from her blue lips an intelligent history of her condition. Love, however, is at once credulous and apprehensive, and Shelley immediately decided that she had been deserted, and with his wonted precipitation, (for in the career of humanity his active spirit knew no pause) he proposed different schemes for the permanent relief of the poor foundling. I answered, that it was desirable in the first place to try to procure some food, for of this the want was manifestly the most urgent. I then climbed the hill to reconnoitre, and observed a cottage close at hand, on the left of the road. With considerable difficulty—with a gentle violence, indeed, Shelley induced the child to accompany him thither. After much delay, we procured from the people of the place some warm milk. It was a strange spectacle to watch the young poet, with the enthusiastic and intensely earnest manner that characterizes the legitimate brethren of the celestial art—the heaven-born and finely inspired sons of genuine poesy—holding the wooden bowl in one hand, and the wooden spoon in the other, and kneeling on his left knee, that he might more certainly attain to her mouth. The hot milk was agreeable to the girl, and its effects were salutary, but she was obviously uneasy at the detention.

"Her uneasiness increased, and ultimately prevailed; we returned with her to the place where we had found her, Shelley bearing the bowl of milk in his hand.

"Here we saw some people anxiously looking for the child; as soon as the girl perceived them, she was content, and taking the bowl from Shelley, she finished it without his help."

Several other anecdotes are related of Shelley's active benevolence to children of the poor people. The passionate fondness of the Platonic philosophy, seemed to sharpen his natural affection for them, and his sympathy with their innocence.

"Every true Platonist," he used to say, "must be a lover of children, for they are our masters and instructors in philosophy; the mind of a new-born infant, so far from being, as Locke affirms, a sheet of blank paper, is a pocket edition, containing every dialogue—a complete Elzevir Plato, if we can fancy such a pleasant volume, and moreover, a perfect encyclopædia, comprehending not only all the newest discoveries, but all those still more valuable and wonderful inventions that will be made hereafter.

"In consequence of this theory, upon which his active imagination loved to dwell, and which he delighted to maintain in argument, with the few persons qualified to dispute with him on the higher metaphysics; his fondness for children—a fondness innate in generous minds, was augmented and elevated, and the gentle interest expanded into a profound and philosophical sentiment. The Platonists have been illustrious in all ages, on account of the strength and permanence of their attachments.

"In Shelley the parental affections were developed at an early period to an unusual extent; it was manifest, therefore, that his heart was formed by nature and by cultivation to derive the most exquisite gratification from the society of his own progeny, or the most poignant anguish from a natural or unnatural bereavement."

It was his fate, in the most cruel manner, as I have already stated, to endure the first, nor was he to be spared the last of these miseries that flesh is heir to. But that time was yet distant.

Shelley, as was natural, took, we may perceive by the extract from *Julian and Maddalo*, a lively interest in this child of Byron's; the mother having been one of the companions of his travels, in his two outwanderings,—and he it was who paid her *pension* at Florence, and supported her during his life and made a provision for her after his death. The little creature, the offspring of

his friend's *liaison*, took, as I have heard Shelley frequently say,* a violent dislike to the father, as it was just it should to one who had so cruelly renounced and injured her who gave birth to it. Nor had Byron much affection for Allegra; a Mrs. V——n,¹ it appears, saw the infant at Mr. Hoppner's, the consul's, at Venice, and being herself childless, wished to adopt it; and Byron would have consented to the proposition, but for Shelley; indeed Lord Byron seems to have been disappointed at the failure of the arrangement; Mr. Moore says, "broken off by his refusing to grant the entire renunciation of his parental authority;"—but what parental authority could be exercised over a child in a distant country, educated by strangers? Lord Byron expresses his disappointment at the breaking off the negociation, in a letter to Mr. Hoppner, thus: "I thought you would have an answer from Mrs. V——n. You have had *bore* enough with me, and mine already."

Many years after, a lady whose talents and accomplishments are thrown into shade by the qualities of her heart,—I allude to the lamented Lady Blessington, from whom I had the anecdote—took a great interest in the mother of Allegra, and had obtained for her, or thought she had obtained, a situation as humble companion. Miss C[lairmont] was too noble to conceal her story from the ear of her intended benefactress, before she entered on her office; and in consequence of her sincerity, the affair was broken off. How applicable are Shelley's words to the

* This has been confirmed by Moore, Notices of Ld Byron, &c.²

¹ The abortive adoption incident is taken from Moore's *Works of Lord Byron* (1832-3, iv. 172); but Medwin, no doubt through mere carelessness, had substituted V——n for V——r; and did not correct the blunder

when he had the page under his hand and added the foot-note in writing. Vavassour appears to have been the lady's name; see Mr. Prothero's edition (iv. 325).

² *Cave!* This is far too positive.

unfortunate young lady, whose life before and since this one false step, has never had a shadow of blame thrown on it, and whose talents, manners, and accomplishments well fitted her for any circle.

“Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature, the world declares against her, pitiless, unceasing war. She must be the tame slave—she must make no reprisals. *Theirs* is the right of persecution—*hers* the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy—the low and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She is the criminal, the froward, the untameable child; and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom.”¹

Should this passage meet the eye of the overrighteous individual to whom it is applied, let her reflect on these words, and blush through her rouge with shame. No! “the cold-hearted worldling” will smile with self-complacency at her own virtue, and deem it one of the proudest and most saving acts of her life, to have repulsed and rejected the frail one. How would morality, dressed in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image, could she look in the mirror of Nature.

On Shelley's reaching England one of the few persons with whom he was acquainted was Leigh Hunt. His acquaintance with him now ripened into the closest intimacy. I believe indeed that Shelley together with Miss Godwin and Miss C[lairmont] lived for some time after his arrival under Leigh Hunt's roof—and that here the ladies one or both were confined, to the no small scandal of the neighbourhood—Miss C. of Allegra. Leigh Hunt was at that time joint editor of the far-famed *Examiner*, and which made him in the eyes of Lord Byron (but more so in those of his future biographer, Mr. Moore, who

¹ Adapted from the *Queen Mab* note on prostitution, which, in its coarser original form, would not have suited the biographer so well.

always had the hell of reviews before him,) a person of some consequence and weight in the literary world.

Leigh Hunt was then living at Hampstead, and here Shelley also, I believe, first met Keats.

I have been furnished by a lady, who, better even than Leigh Hunt, knew Keats, with the means of supplying many interesting particulars respecting him; so well indeed did she know him, that she might have furnished materials for that life of him promised by Mr. Brown, who unfortunately died in New Zealand before it was completed, and where Keats's MSS. and papers were said to have been lost, but it was not so, for they have since the first edition of this work appeared, been edited by Mr. Monckton Milnes. Keats was left fatherless at an early age, and when he came to years of discretion, was apprenticed to an apothecary, but the sight of suffering humanity, and the anatomical school, soon disgusted him with the pursuit, and he abandoned the profession of medicine, but not originally to follow the ill-named flowery paths of poetry; for an authentic anecdote is told of him, corroborative of this remark. One day, sitting dreamily over his desk, he was endeavouring to while away a tedious hour by copying some verses from memory; one of his brother apprentices looking over his shoulder, said, "Keats, what are you a poet?" It is added, he was much piqued at the *accusation*, and replied, "Poet indeed! I never composed a line in my life." The same story is told of Walter Scott, who in crossing over one of the Scotch lakes, endeavoured to put his ideas into verse, but on landing had only made two bad rhymes, and observed to the friend who accompanied him, "I shall never do for a poet." But Keats no less than the Wizard of the North, falsified his own prophecy. Keats

was ever a constant reader of Shakspeare, and I have before me a folio edition of the great dramatist's works, with notes and comments on *Troilus and Cressida*, and containing at the end of the volume an ode, evidently a very early attempt, which, properly for his fame, he did not publish. He might also have forborne giving to the world some other of the short poems, his first attempts in the art. We are certainly indebted for the discovery of the poetic vein in him to Leigh Hunt, and his encouragement of his young friend. But it is equally owing to Leigh Hunt that the disciple enrolled himself in what has been termed the Cockney school, and fell into a pale imitation of the Elizabethan writers, and the adoption of a language, neither Shaksperian nor Spenserian—a language neither belonging to his own time, nor to society. How well does Quintilian designate some author of his day who had a similar mania! “Sepultam scribendi artem suscitât, oblitteratas restituit literas, antiquos renovat apices, abrogatas recudit literarum formulas, et ingens opus, rei literariæ miraculum quod stupeat, &c.” Thus, in the words of Dr. Johnson, speaking of two of his contemporaries, he “affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival, and thought his language more poetical, as it was more removed from common use.” Such was the prevailing fault of *Endymion*, an unreadable poem, only redeemed by the Hymn to Pan, and a few scattered passages, Oases in the misty desert of an outworn mythology, and composed under the inspiration of Highgate, at the time when he saw in every tree a Dryad, and which classical spot gave birth to Mr. Leigh Hunt's *Nymphs*—a worthy Pendant.

Shelley told me that he and Keats had mutually agreed, in the same given time, (six months each,) to write a long

poem, and that the *Endymion*, and *Revolt of Islam* were the fruits of this rivalry. But I shall have much to say on the subject of these poems, in the course of these memoirs; and with this introduction of the reader to Keats, let me turn to Shelley, and his eventful history.

During his stay at Hampstead he one evening found in his walks a young woman who had fallen in a swoon and was lying in the path. Shelley with his usual impetuosity of character rang at the bell of the nearest villa, and insisted on the footman's aiding him in carrying the poor unfortunate into the house.—The man laughed, and shut the door in his face. When she recovered from her fit, it seems that her illness had arisen from intoxication. It is related of Burke that he brought home to his wife a similar being, and his biographer adds that she afterwards became a virtuous member of society. It is a long time since I have spoken of Mrs. Shelley. In the spring of 1816 a tragic circumstance occurred over which I could wish to draw a veil.—She alas cut off her days by suicide.

De Quincey, speaking of this dreadful event, says, "It is one chief misery of a beautiful young woman, separated from her natural protector, that her desolate situation attracts and stimulates the calumnies of the malicious. Stung by these calumnies," he adds, "and oppressed, as I have understood, by the loneliness of her abode, she threw herself into a pond and was drowned." Now it must be remembered that the separation took place in the spring of 1814, and that the catastrophe occurred more than two years afterwards,—a long period for her to have brooded over her wrongs or misfortunes before they produced such frightful effects. Her fate was a dreadful misfortune to her who perished, and him who survived.

I have said in the *Shelley Papers*, that it is impossible to acquit Shelley of all blame in this calamity. From his knowledge of her character, he must have been aware, as has been said by another, "that she was an individual unadapted to an exposure to principles of action, which if even pregnant with danger when of self-organisation, are doubly so when communicated to minds altogether unfit for their reception;" and he should have kept an eye over her conduct.

But his conduct admits of some palliatives. On their separation, he delivered her back into the hands of her father and eldest sister. He told them almost in these words, that "his wife and himself had never loved each other; that to continue to drag on the chain, would only be a protraction of torture to both, and that as they could not legally extricate themselves from the Gordian knot, they had mutually determined to cut it. That he wished her all happiness, and should endeavour by sympathy with another, to seek it himself. He added, that having received no fortune with her, and her father being in easy circumstances, he was not at the moment able to make her the allowance he could wish; that the sum he then gave her was all he could command; that, he should for a time leave the child in their hands, and care; but should at a more advanced age, claim it; and Mr. and Mrs. Shelley parted on good terms, though not without reproaches and harsh language from the father. Little or no blame as to the melancholy catastrophe that succeeded, could therefore be imputed to Shelley; *that* must fall on her relations, who with the knowledge of her character and conduct, by advice, or other measures, ought to have watched over both. Having once confided her to their superintendence, he might consider, with many others

similarly circumstanced, that his responsibility was over. That he did not do so, his compunction, which brought on a temporary derangement, proves. De Quincey, in speaking of this circumstance, to which I alluded in a memoir of Shelley, says that the mention of it arose from a wish to gratify a fugitive curiosity in strangers; and adds, that it appears from the peace of mind which Shelley is reported afterwards to have recovered for a time, that he could not have had to reproach himself with any harshness or neglect as contributing to the shocking catastrophe. Without any compunctious visitings, however, morbidly sensitive as he was, well might it painfully excite him. Such a fate as hers, could not be contemplated even by the most indifferent stranger, without a deep sympathy; much more must the shock have come home to the feelings of one who had owed her two children. How pathetically does he in a dirge, not unworthy of Shakspeare, give vent to his agonised heart:

That time is dead for ever, child!
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever;—
 We look on the past,
 And stare aghast,
 At the spectres wailing pale and ghast
 Of hopes that thou and I beguiled
 To death on Life's dark river.

There are some lines also commencing with "The cold earth slept below" dated November 1815 which seem prophetic of the destiny of this unfortunate lady, and end with

The Night did shed on thy dear head
 Its frozen dew and thou didst lie
 Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
 Might visit thee at will.

but might not the date have been erroneous?—The stanzas written in the subsequent year, the to him fatal year of 1816.

On the occasion of his wife's tragic end, Shelley went to Bath, where his children were, in order to bring them home, and place them under the tutelage and tuition of a lady whom he had chosen for that purpose, and who was every way qualified for the office; but Mr. Westbrook refused to give them up, and instituted against Shelley, a suit in Chancery, to prevent his obtaining possession of them. The bill filed, and the answer to it, would, if they could be procured, be most interesting. I imagine Shelley refers to the document he put in, in a letter to some anonymous friend, who had, he thought, overrated its merit, for he says;—"It was a forced, unimpassioned piece of cramped and cautious argument." But few authors are the best judges of their own compositions, and the high idea which Shelley seems to have entertained of his correspondent's critical judgment, suggests that the arguments were strong, and carried with them conviction.¹

The petition presented to the court in the name of the infant plaintiffs, states the marriage at Gretna Green, in the year 1811, and that they were the [only] issue of it; that the father had deserted his wife and had since unlawfully cohabited with another woman; that thereupon the mother returned to the house of her father with the eldest of the infants, and that the other was soon after born; that they had since that time been maintained by their mother, and

¹ Save for the untrue words at *Gretna Green* the next paragraph is taken from a note to the case of *Lyons v. Blenkin* in Jacob's Reports, vol. iii, p. 266. No doubt Medwin's wondrous figure "7266" means "p. 266". His reference "Reg. lib. xiii., 723," should be "Reg. Lib. B. 1816, fol. 725." His transcript of the judgment as handed to Jacob by Mr. Shadwell, Counsel in support of the petition, is so

imperfectly made that I have thought it worth while to rectify it. Appended to "these Memorabilia," as Medwin delights to call his two volumes of excellent material grossly mishandled, are the petition, Shelley's reply, and other Chancery papers in the case, which I got copied from the Records thirty or forty years ago. They will be found at the close of this volume.

her father ; and that the mother had lately died. It was then stated, that the father, *since* his marriage, had written and published a work, in which he blasphemously denied the truth of the Christian religion, and denied the existence of a God, the Creator of the universe ; and that, since the death of his wife, he had demanded that the children should be delivered up to him, and that he intended, if he could get hold of their persons, to educate them as he thought proper. It goes on to say, that their maternal grandfather had lately transmitted £2,000, four per cents., into the names of trustees, upon trust for them, on their attaining twenty-one, or marriage with his consent ; and in the meantime to apply the dividends to their maintenance and education.

This suit, unlike most of those in chancery, was not long protracted, for on the 17th March, 1817, Lord Eldon gave his judgment in writing, as appears in Reg. lib. xiii., 723. See Jacob's Reports of Cases during the time of Lord Eldon, vol. iii, 7266 :—

“ I have read all the papers left with me, and all the cases cited. With respect to the question of jurisdiction, it is unnecessary for me to add to what I have already stated. After the example of Lord Thurlow in Orby Hunter's case I shall act upon the notion that this court has such jurisdiction until the House of Lords shall decide that my Predecessors have been unwarranted in the exercise of it.

“ I have carefully looked through the answer of the defendant to see whether it affects the representation made in the affidavits filed in support of the petition and in the exhibits referred to, of the principles and conduct in life of the father in this case. I do not perceive that the answer does affect that representation and no affidavits are filed against the petition. Upon the case, as represented in the affidavits, the exhibits, and the answer, I have formed my opinion conceiving myself according to the practice of the court at liberty to form it in the case of an infant whether the petition in its allegations and suggestions has or has not accurately presented that case to the court and having intimated in the course of the hearing before me that I should so form my judgment.

"There is nothing in evidence before me, sufficient to authorise me in thinking that this gentleman has changed, before he arrived at twenty-five, the principles he avowed at nineteen. I think there is ample evidence in the papers and in conduct that no such change has taken place.

"I shall studiously forbear in this case, because it is unnecessary, to state in judgment what this court might or might not be authorised to do in the due exercise of its jurisdiction upon the ground of the probable effect of a father's principles of any nature upon the education of his children where such principles have not yet been called into activity or manifested in such conduct in life, as this court upon such an occasion as the present, would be bound to attend to.

"I may add that the case differs also, unless I misunderstand it, from any case in which such principles having been called into activity nevertheless in the probable range and extent of their operation did not put to hazard the happiness and welfare of those whose interests are entrusted to the protection of this court.

"This is a case in which as the matter appears to me, the father's principles cannot be misunderstood; in which his conduct, which I cannot but consider as highly immoral, has been established in proof and established as the effect of those principles; conduct nevertheless which he represents to himself and others, not as conduct to be considered as immoral, but to be recommended and observed in practice, and as worthy of approbation.

"I consider this, therefore, as a case in which the father has demonstrated that he must and does deem it to be matter of duty which his principles impose on him to recommend to those whose opinions and habits he may take upon himself to form, that conduct in some of the most important relations of life, as moral and virtuous, which the law calls upon me to consider as immoral and vicious,—conduct which the law animadverts upon, as inconsistent with the duties of parents in such relations of life, and which it considers as injuriously affecting both the interests of such persons, and those of the community.

"I cannot therefore think that I shall be justified in delivering over these children for their education exclusively to what is called the care, to which Mr. S. wishes it to be entrusted.

"If I am wrong in the judgment which I have formed in this painful case I have the consolation to reflect that my judgment is not final.

"Much has been said upon the fact that these children are of tender years. I have already explained in the course of the hearing the grounds upon which I think that circumstance not so material as to require me to pronounce no order.

"I add that the attention which I have been called upon to give to the consideration how far the pecuniary interests of these children may be affected has not been called for in vain. I should deeply regret that if any act of mine materially affects those interests. But to such interests I cannot sacrifice what I deem to be interests of greater value and higher importance. In what degree and to what extent the court will interfere in this case against parental authority, cannot be fully determined till after the Master's report.

"In the meantime I pronounce the following order."

The order restrained the father and his agents from taking possession of the persons of the infants or intermeddling with them till further order, and it was referred to the Master to enquire what would be a proper plan for the maintenance and education of the infants, and also to enquire with whom, and under whose care the infants should remain during their minority or until further order.

In consequence of this decree of the court, the girl and boy were placed under the guardianship of Miss Westbrook, and Shelley told me in 1820, that either £200 or £300 a year out of his limited income, was made over to them for the education and support of these children; such sum being deducted by his father from his annuity. The event of this "trial, I think they call it," acted as a continual canker on the mind of Shelley, and although by authority of the solitary case of Mr. Orby Hunter, the court assumed to itself the control of a father's authority over his children, (and the Shelley proceedings were afterwards made an additional precedent in the case of Mr. Long Wellesley,) more liberal times have come, and it has since been declared by a Lord Chancellor, that such a power shall never again be exercised. The argument of Mr. Long Wellesley, even on the admission of irreligious or immoral conduct on the part of a father, was unanswerable. He contended that it by no means follows—such is the innate love of virtue and morality implanted in us, and a sense of the effects of a dereliction of them on their own happiness and that of others—that the worst

of men would not wish to bring up his children irreligiously, much less immorally. But with the exception of Shelley's separation from—called a desertion of, his wife, and the writing and printing—for it was never published—of *Queen Mab*, no act of immorality was proved against him; and, in confirmation of Byron's opinion, that he was one of the most moral men he ever knew, I can certainly say, that as far as my experience of him goes, and it extended through his whole life, with the exception only of a very few years, both in example and moral precept, in a high sense of honour, and regard to truth, and all the qualities of a refined and perfect gentleman, no one could have been a better guide and instructor of youth.

What defence Shelley put in, we know not; but with reference to *Queen Mab*, from my knowledge of his character, I should consider that, however he might have modified, and did modify his opinions, he was the last man to have recanted them, either by compulsion, or in order to carry a point. The idea that the world would have given him credit for making that recantation from interested motives, and not from conviction, would alone have been sufficient to deter him from such a step.

The poignancy of his regrets at being torn from his children, and his indignation at the tyranny of that tribunal, which he designates,—

darkest crest!
Of that foul-knotted, many-headed worm,
Which rends its mother's bosom—Priestly pest!
Masked resurrection of a buried form,—

(meaning the Star-chamber,) was shown by his tremendous curse on the Court of Chancery, and him who with "false

tears,"* habitual to him, which Shelley calls, "the millstones braining men," delivered the judgment above quoted.

Shelley, witness this anathema, had a tremendous power of satire, and could wield the weapon at will with a lash of bronze. Our English Juvenal Churchill's, and Byron's satires, were mere gnat-bites compared with the scorpion stings, which he inflicted. Did he send these verses to Lord Eldon? No, he never promulgated them, and I believe he would have said, in the words that he puts into the mouth of his Prometheus,—

It doth repent me, words are quick and vain,—
Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

But besides its haughty indignation, there breathes through the poem the tenderness of a father's love. And here I must remark, that what particularly afflicted him, was, that his children should have been placed under the guardianship of a person of mean education, and of a low condition of life, totally unequal to the office, and who from his narrow-mindedness would, he was convinced, bring them up with a rooted hatred to their father.

After their removal, he never saw them.† They were

* *Pandarus*. But there was such laughing, Queen Hecuba laugh till her eyes ran sore. *Cressida*. With millstones.

Shakspeare.—Troilus and Cressida.

† The son died—the daughter whom he christened Ianthe after the heroine of *Queen Mab* is still living—and married—to a Mr. Esdaile.¹

¹ Mrs. Esdaile lived till the year 1876. It is to be remembered that Shelley's blood, by direct descent, runs in the veins of the Esdailes only, the descendants of his daughter Ianthe, some of whom were present at the Haymarket Theatre in June 1912 to witness the perform-

ances got up through the generosity of Mr. Harrison in aid of the funds of the memorial house at Rome bought to honour Shelley and Keats. It would be ridiculous to set Medwin to rights about all this Harriett business; but at all events it must be here stated that Dr. and

become dead to him, and he sought for that affection denied him in them, in the offspring which his second wife bore him. No man was fonder of his children than Shelley; he loved them to idolatry, and clung to them as part and parcel of himself. Sometimes a frightful dream came over him, that these second pledges of affection would also be wrested from him by the same ruthless and merciless *fiat*, and the dread of such an event would have proved an effectual barrier to his ever taking up his abode in his native land. Haunted by such frightful spectres, he wrote the lines happily preserved from oblivion, inspired many years after his first misfortune, by hearing that the chancellor, had thrown out some hint of that intention. How truly affecting are these stanzas, especially where, alluding to the loss of his children, he paints the consequence that must ensue from that withdrawal from his care:—

They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
 They have made them unfit for thee;
 They have withered the smile and dried the tear
 That should have been sacred to me.
 And they will curse my name and thee,
 Because we fearless are and free.

And in *Rosalind and Helen*, he says,—

What avail
 Or prayers or tears that chace denial,
 From the fierce savage, nursed in hate;
 What the knit soul, that, pleading and pale,
 Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late
 It painted with its own delight?—
We were divided.

No one felt more than Lord Byron, the inhuman and unchristian decree of the Court of Chancery; and speaking

Mrs. Hume, who looked after Ianthe and Charles Bysshe Shelley, were nominated by their father, the

poet. Dowden's Life should be consulted by those who hunger for readable details on this matter.

of the suit, he says,—“Had I been in England, I would have moved heaven and earth to have reversed such a decision.”

Shelley was now enfranchised from his matrimonial ties—but according to the author of the article in the *Revue des deux mondes*—to quote his words—neither himself or his mistress thought of cementing their union by marriage; but it was the destiny of this enemy of that state to be twice wedded—“Son père,” he adds, “sut le decider a ce second hymen.”—There the reviewer was mistaken. It was not his father but Lord Byron who persuaded him to this step, contrary not only to his own principles but those of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin.¹

In the spring of 1817, Shelley took a house at Marlow, and there passed nearly a year. His choice of Buckinghamshire, and of this town, as an abode, was chiefly owing to its being at an easy distance from London, and on the banks of his favorite river the Thames. Here it was, that in addition to *Prince Athanase*, some minor lyrics, and part of *Rosalind and Helen*, he composed *The Revolt of Islam*, and wrote a pamphlet, now lost, on the occasion of the Princess Charlotte's death, entitled, *The Hermit of Marlow*.² In the spring of 1835, I made an excursion to Marlow, in order to visit scenes, that were among the sources of inspiration of *Laon and Cythna*, as the first edition of

¹ The only person entitled to this name was Godwin's daughter by his first wife Mary Godwin, born Wollstonecraft, though I suspect Medwin means the mother, not the daughter. Shelley consented to an immediate marriage with Mary at her own earnest wish and her father's. See Dowden, ii. 71.

² The pamphlet is neither lost nor entitled *The Hermit of Marlow*. Although no copy of the original has yet been traced, there was at least one extant several years later,

when Thomas Rodd had it reprinted, apparently with great care. Entitled *An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte*, ascribed to “The Hermit of Marlow,” and bearing the motto “We pity the plumage, but forget the dying bird,” it is really a wail for the poor fellows Brandreth, Turner, and Ludlam, who were executed for “high treason” on the 7th of November 1817,—a wail, too, for the death of Liberty in England.

The Revolt of Islam was entitled. The house he inhabited was pointed out to me, by almost the first person, a middle-aged man, of whom I enquired. It was in a retired street, and commanded no view—a comfortable abode, with gothic windows, and behind it a garden and shady orchard plot, of some extent, carpeted with the greenest turf, which must have afforded a delightful retreat in the summer noon. Not only the town itself, with its church and bridge, and old buildings, is highly picturesque, but the environs are strikingly beautiful, and remarkable for their fine country seats; Daney, so called from a Danish camp having once existed here, whose entrenchment may still be traced,—Hanneker, built by Inigo Jones, and many other noble residences, inhabited by families of wealth and distinction, diversify the landscapes, and make them an enchantment. Nor must I forget the fall of the river, over an artificial embankment immediately above the town, where the eye crossing the richest meadows, rests on the lovely beech groves of Bisham Abbey.¹

“In no place are riches and poverty presented in more prominent contrast. Lace-making is the occupation of the poor, women being the operatives, who lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they are badly paid. The poor-laws ground to the dust those who had just risen above pauperage, and were obliged to pay them. The changes produced by peace following a long war, were heavily felt; the trade which had been their support, flowing into other channels, produced great destitution and misery, which a bad harvest contributed to enhance.”

Shelley had a very early sympathy for the working classes. I remember the very harrowing effect which Southey's *Don Espriello's Letters* produced on him in 1810 or 1811; one of the most frightful, faithful pictures ever

¹ These passages about Marlow and its inhabitants seem to have been adapted from Mary Shelley's

editorial note on *The Revolt of Islam*. Great liberties are, as usual, taken with the text.

drawn of the wretchedness, vice, and immorality that seem necessary concomitants of an overproduction of manufactures. The impression this feelingly written work made on Shelley, was ineffaceable, and gave rise to the apostrophe in *Queen Mab*,—

Commerce! beneath whose poison-breathing shade
 No solitary virtue dares to spring,
 But poverty and wealth with equal hand
 Scatter their withering curses, and unfold
 The doors of premature and violent death,
 To pining famine, and full-fed disease,
 To all that shares the lot of human life,
 Which poisoned body and soul scarce drags the chain
 That lengthens as it goes, and clanks behind.

And again :

His host of blind and unresisting dupes
 The despot numbers, from his cabinet
 These puppets of his schemes he moves at will,
 Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,
 Beneath a vulgar master, to perform
 A task of cold and brutal drudgery—
 Hardened to hope—insensible to fear—
 Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,
 Mere wheels of work and articles of trade.

In a note appended to these passages, penned with all that sincerity and conviction of truth, that uncompromising spirit that characterises all his writings, a note in which he deprecates the luxury of the rich, calling it “a remedy that aggravates, while it pollutes the countless divisions of society,” he adds that “the poor are set to labour—for what? Not for the food for which they famish—not for the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels—not those comforts of civilization, without which, civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage, oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect

of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him. No! for the pride of power—for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society.”

In this town of Marlow, he had an opportunity, not of visiting quite such loathsome dens as described in these *Letters of a Spaniard*, where the factory lords stifle their victims in the great hotbeds of crime and pollution, Manchester and Leeds,—but he saw enough to shock and disgust him. He did all in his power to alleviate the condition of the poor lace-makers of Marlow; “he visited them in their damp and fireless abodes—he supplied them with blankets and coals and food and medicines, and from tending one of the sick, caught the ophthalmia, which nearly deprived him of sight.”

These facts I had confirmed by a lady still resident there, one of its great ornaments, who did ample justice to Shelley’s memory, and related many individual anecdotes of his benevolence and charity, that called for her warmest sympathy and admiration. I may add, that his name is still perpetuated among the inhabitants, who are proud of having harboured the poet, and counted him among their number. I was surprised indeed, considering the low and disgraceful state of education in England, to find that any of them were acquainted with his works, and hailed the circumstance as a pledge of his immortality,—and an immortal work is *The Revolt of Islam*.

He had originally, it would seem, after the *Divine Comedy*, intended to have written it in terza rima, of which he made an experiment in *Prince Athanase*; but soon after abandoned that metre, as too monotonous and artificial, and adopted instead the stanza of Spenser, which he wields as none have ever done before him. The fragment

of *Prince Athanase* is valuable, as the first conception of a great picture by a great master. In this sketch of the prince, we find the germs of the character of Laon. Athanase is a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, animated by a resolution to confer the boons of civil and religious liberty on his fellow men ; and the poet doubtless meant to have created for him a companion endued with the same enthusiasm.

A lovelier creature than Cythna, heart never conceived—a purer love than those of Laon and Cythna words could not express. The story I shall not analyse—it is indeed treated with the simplicity of Grecian art, and might have furnished Thorwaldsen with a subject for a series of *bas reliefs*.

This poem occupied six months. It was composed as he floated in his skiff on the Thames, reclined beneath its willow and alder fringed banks, or took refuge from the noonday solstician heats, in some island only the haunt of the swan. A Marlow gentleman told me, Shelley spent frequently whole nights in his boat, taking up his occasional abode at a small inn down the river which I imagine must have been at Cookham. We find everywhere scattered about this poem, strikingly faithful drawings of the scenery near and about Marlow ; and with *The Revolt of Islam* in my hand, I for nearly a month, traversed the stream up and down, from the sequestered and solemn solitudes of the deep woods of Clifden, on the one hand, to the open sunniness of the enamelled meadows of Henley on the other, and often fancied myself in the very spots so graphically depicted. The opening in that most graceful dedication,—

So now my summer task is ended, Mary,
And I return to thee,—

proves that he had been passing this summer in great isolation from his family, and is a tribute to the virtues of one of the noblest-minded of her sex,—“a child of glorious parents,” as he styles her, and inheriting much of the talent of both, which has gained for her a name, reflecting honour on either.

The life which Shelley led at Marlow, occasionally varied by short trips to London, was, as far as the society of the place was concerned, a most isolated one. Among his principal amusements, were boating and pistol practice, and it was complained that he “frightened the place from its propriety ;” and one of his neighbours pretended that she was afraid of going out for fear of being shot ; no doubt a very false alarm. Among his visitors may be mentioned, Mr. Peacock, and his old college friend, Mr. Hogg ; to the latter of whom we are indebted for filling up so important a chasm in Shelley’s history, his Oxonian career,—materials, of which I have largely availed myself. The first of these gentlemen has not had the reputation to which *Nightmare Abbey*, and his other novels, justly entitled him. “They were too good for his age,” as Byron said, and in this novel the author seized on some points of Shelley’s character, and some habits of his life, when he painted Scythrop. It has been erroneously supposed also that Godwin in his *Mandeville* had Shelley in his eye, but if it was so, that constitutional antipathy and suspicion which soon sprung up into hatred and contempt and barren misanthropy which he ascribes to the hero of that tale, were foreign from Shelley. But there is a work of Mr. Peacock’s, to which a more glaring injustice has been done,—I allude to *Rhododaphne*. The first time I met with that exquisite poem, was at Paris, where I saw it lying on a lady’s table. She told me it

was her favourite poem, and that she read it several times every year, and with increased pleasure.

It is something to have contributed to the happiness of one human being. Shelley agreed with her as to the merits of *Rhododaphne*, for he says,—“It is a book from which I confess, I expected extraordinary success.” But although containing passages that throw into shade all that Rogers and Campbell in their cold and stilted Didactics have produced, it fell dead from the press. Let the author console himself in this age of reviews and coteries, with the reflection, that the *Epipsychidion* met afterwards with a similar fate,—that *it* rose from its ashes, and that his may yet do so; if it should not, I hope that in the island where Ariosto places all the lost treasures of earth, may be preserved among those neglected works, which have like straws been swept down the current of time, for the recreation of “the *Translated*,” *Rhododaphne*.

In six months of this year, to write and correct the press of such a work as *Laon and Cythna*, was no slight task; perhaps the mental excitement gave a diversion to his thoughts, and it must have required a rare power of self-condensation and abstraction, to have enabled him to write under the different afflictions that beset him. The publicity of the proceedings in Chancery, coupled with the death of his wife, raised a host of detractors against him; *Queen Mab* was universally decried, his children made over to strangers—and to crown all, his health in a very precarious state. He had formed an idea that the situation of his house at Marlow was an insalubrious one—that a warm climate was absolutely essential to him; and this, and various other reasons, among which, the conviction that the breach between himself and his relations was irreparable, weighing

more than all the rest—induced him to come to a resolution of quitting England, with scarcely a hope of revisiting it. He reached Milan on the 22d of March, 1818, and gave an interesting account of his excursion to Como, in a letter to his friend Mr. Peacock.

“Since I last wrote to you, we have been at Como, looking for a house. This lake exceeds any thing I ever beheld of beauty, with the exception of the arbutus-islands of Killarney. It is long and narrow, and has the appearance of a mighty river winding among the mountains and the forests. We sailed from the town of Como to a tract of country called the Tremezina, and saw the various aspects presented by that part of the lake. The mountains between Como and that village, are covered with chesnut forests, which sometimes descend to the very verge of the lake, overhanging it with their hoary branches. But usually the immediate border of the shore is composed of laurel trees, and bay and myrtle, and wild fig-trees, and olives, which grow in the crevices of rocks, and overhang the caverns, and shadow the deep glens, which are filled with the flashing light of the waterfalls.”

I have been thus minute in the description of this lake, because he here lays the scene of *Rosalind and Helen*. I have often read and with ever-new delight the exquisite Lines with which this Poem closes. “*Oh si sic omnia.*” I was mistaken in supposing he had past the summer at Como¹; in fact his stay there was confined to two days, for he found the villas far too expensive for him, tho’ it appears he had had the intention, abandoned for the above reason, of taking the Villa Pliniana so minutely described by Pliny the younger with its inter-mitting fountain, and Cypresses that overcome it only to be matched by those in the Burial grounds of Constanti-nople. Regrets that so few of Shelley’s letters should have been saved, will be awakened by the perusal of those which

¹ See *Conversations of Lord Byron*, 1824, p. 251 of the original quarto and p. 311 of the (revised) octavo

edition. In the two-volume edition of 1825, see ii. 109.

during his first visit to Italy he addressed to Mr. Peacock. These letters are very valuable, nor do more splendid specimens of writing exist in any language. It is true that (as confessed by Mrs. Shelley) his early impressions regarding the Italians were formed in ignorance and precipitation, and became altogether altered after a longer stay in the country; and that his knowledge of painting, though he exhibits a high feeling of art, was a very limited one; and his criticisms on the works of particular masters, shew but a very superficial acquaintance with the subject. He used to say that he understood statuary, and there he was right—but not painting; not meaning that he was in any way insensible to the merits of pictures—of the divine Raphael's, for instance, whom I have often thought Shelley resembled in expression, (I allude to the portrait in the Louvre) as well as genius, though it took a different direction,—but that he did not know the styles of different masters—a knowledge which is only to be acquired by a microscopic eye, and the faculty of comparison. Of his appreciation of the ancient sculptures, I shall have to speak hereafter,—*there* he was at home.

After sojourning at Milan for nearly a month, during which he appears to have received but one letter from England, on the 1st May he proceeded towards Pisa. He was much struck with the well irrigated, rich plain of the *Milanese*, and the sight of the vineyards about Parma revived all his classical recollections—his memories of the *Georgics*. “The vines,” he says, “here, are particularly picturesque. They are trellissed on immense stakes, and the trunks of them are moss-grown and hoary with age. Unlike the French vines, which creep lowly along the ground, they form rows of intertwined bowers, which when the leaves are green, and the red grapes hanging among

their branches, will afford a delightful shadow to those who sit upon the moss beneath.

From Pisa he proceeded to Leghorn, where he staid [*sic*] a month. There he made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, the latter of whom, he says, was very amiable and accomplished, and by the former of whom he was initiated in the beauties of Calderon, from the purchase of some odd volumes of his plays, and Autos, which were ever after his constant companions. He now retreated from the summer heats to the baths of Lucca, posted in umbrageous chesnut forests. He did not there forget to visit the *Prato fiorito*, a spot on the mountain, carpeted with jonquils, from which the place takes the name of the Meadow of Flowers. So powerful is their odour, that many persons have fainted with their excess of sweetness, and Shelley has described to me, that they were nearly producing on him the same effect.¹

Some time in August, leaving his family at the baths, he set out for Florence. The view from the Boboli gardens, in a note which he shewed me—a view almost unparalleled—inspired him with the following burst of poetry :

“ You see below Florence, a smokeless city, with its domes and spires occupying the vale, and beyond to the right, the Apennines, whose base extends even to the walls, and whose summits are intersected by ashen-coloured clouds. The green valleys of these mountains which gently unfold themselves upon the plains, and the intervening hills, covered with vineyards and olive plantations, are occupied by

¹ Hence, doubtless, the passage in *Epipsychidion* (451-3) :—

And from the moss violets and
jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odour
through the brain.
Till you might faint with that
delicious pain.

This effect of the smell of jonquils is not extremely uncommon ; but

cases where the person thus affected actually loses consciousness are rare. Dr. Brasse of the *Gradus ad Parnassum* affords a case in point. In my boyhood his daughter and sister-in-law were intimate friends of my parents ; and Frances Brasse, the daughter, told me many times that her father could not be in the presence of jonquils without “ fainting dead away.”

the villas which are as it were another city—a Babylon of palaces and gardens. In the midst of the picture rolls the Arno, now full with the winter rains, through woods, and bounded by the aerial snowy heights [*var. lec.* summits] of the Apennines. On the right a magnificent buttress of lofty-cragged hills, overgrown with wilderness, juts out into many shapes over a lovely valley, and approaches the walls of the city. Fiesole [*var. lec.* Cascini] and other villages occupy the pinnacles and abutments of those hills, over which are seen at intervals the aerial [*var. lec.* etherial] mountains, hoary with snow, and intersected with clouds. The valley below is covered with cypress groves, whose obeliskine forms of intense green, pierce the grey shadow of the wintry hill that overlooks them. The cypresses too of the garden form a magnificent foreground of accumulated verdure, pyramids of dark green and shining cones rising out of a mass, between which are cut, like caverns, recesses conducting into walks.”¹

His present visit to Florence was a short one. He was anxious to reach Venice. There he found Lord Byron domiciliated. *Julian and Maddalo*, which he calls a *Conversation*, from its familiar style, gives a very valuable, and, no doubt, faithful picture of the manner of life led there by the noble poet, and the sketch of him in the preface is highly valuable. Shelley says, that without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, he resides chiefly in his magnificent palace in that city. “He is,” he adds, “a person of most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country.” In his sketch, he does not spare his friend, but winds it up with,—“Maddalo is proud, because I can find no word to express the concentrated and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems

¹ Medwin seems to have come upon his transcript of this note again when amending the *Life* and to have written it again, somewhat differently, in another part of the book—also to have discovered that

he was there repeating himself; for he struck the interpolation out. Perhaps it is fair to import into the text here any correction obtainable from that page, such as *overhangs* for *overlooks*.

to trample, for in social life no person can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming. He is cheerful, frank, and witty."

Childe Harold and *Beppo* are not more different characters than were the Byron of Geneva, and the Byron of Venice. Mr. Moore has delighted to rake up all the filthy details of his low amours in that degraded city, of which Shelley speaking, says, "he had no conception of the excess to which avarice, cowardice, superstition, ignorance, powerless lust, and all the brutality which degrade human nature, could be carried, till he had passed a few days there." He has also drawn a portrait of his noble poet friend, which reminds us of what Chesterfield said of Bolingbroke: "His youth was there distracted by the tumult and storm of pleasures in which he most licentiously triumphed, devoid of all decorum. His fine imagination often heated and exhausted the body in deifying the prostitute of the night, and his convivial joys were pushed to all the extravagance of frantic Bacchanals. His passions injured both his understanding and character."

But without quoting what Shelley says, in speaking of his dissipations, *Julian and Maddalo* is also precious as a faithful picture of Venice. We seem to sail with the two friends in their gondola—to view with them that gorgeous sunset, from Lido, when—

They turned, and saw the city, and could mark.
How from its many isles in the broad gleam,
Its temples and its palaces did seem
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to heaven.

The madhouse, so graphically drawn, on the island, I know well; but whether the harrowing history of the maniac was imaginary, or but the dim shadowing out of his own sufferings, and a prognostic of what *might* befall himself, I cannot pretend to determine. Who can read it

without shedding tears? and how thrilling is the comment of Maddalo, on the destinies of himself and Julian!

Most wretched men
Are cradled into poverty¹ by wrong—
They learn in suffering what they teach in song.

I have often heard Shelley expatiate on Venice with rapture. It is a city that realised all his fairy visions of happiness. The contrast of its former greatness with its present state of degradation and decay—its once proud independence, when it gave laws to the Mediterranean, and now abject slavery to the Goth, were fruitful sources of poetic inspiration. He might here “have dreamed away life,” he said, in that stillness and repose that was a balm to his wounded spirit, —have

Read in gondolas by day, or night,
Having the little brazen lamp alight,
Unseen, uninterrupted.

Books, pictures were there. Casts from all the statues that were twin-born with poetry,

All
Men seek in towns, with little to recal
Regrets for the green country.

And he adds, “that if he had been an unconnected man, he should never have quitted it.” But Venice was not destined to be his dreamland.

Circumstances rendering it eligible that Shelley should remain a few weeks in the neighbourhood of Venice, he sent for Mrs. Shelley and his children from the baths of Lucca, and accepted the offer of Lord Byron, to lend him the use of his villa near Este; and here they took up their temporary abode.

¹ Medwin has not altered *poverty* to *poetry* as he should have done: it is to be feared that it was a simple

misquotation of his own, from the first.

"I Capuccini, which takes its name from a Capuchin convent suppressed by the French, is picturesquely situate. The house is overhung by the ancient castle of Este, the habitation of owls and bats, but formerly the residence of the Medici family, before they migrated to Florence. From the garden they looked over the wide flat plains of Lombardy, in which they saw the sun and moon rise and set, and all the golden magnificence of autumnal clouds, pleasures which they enjoyed the more after the contrast of the secluded chesnut-overshadowing ravine of the *Bagni di Lucca*."

It was at I Capuccini that he etched, tho' it appears that he did not complete the Poem till his stay at Naples, his magnificent "Lines among the Euganean Hills"—the Introduction to which is steeped in a contagious melancholy, an overwhelming despondency.

Here an anecdote is told of Shelley, that is highly idiosyncratic of him, and marks that "gentleness and firmness which met without destroying each other," in his character. Their infant girl was seized with one of those disorders prevalent in that season from the heat, and there being no good medical advice nearer than Venice, they hastened towards it with the child. His firmness and intrepidity must have been indeed great, when they could so far overawe an Austrian guard, as to make them disobey orders. He had no passport, but they allowed him to quit Fusina without one.

The loss of this child—the first misfortune of that kind its parents had to endure—hastened their journey towards Rome, after only a three weeks' sojourn at Este, and they arrived with their son William at Ferrara on the 8th of November.

Speaking of Tasso, he says, "that his situation was widely different from that of any persecuted being at the present day, for public opinion might now, at length, be awakened to an echo that would startle the oppressor." Alas! he did not find it so himself. They went afterwards

to see the prison in the hospital of Santa Anna. "The dungeon," he says, "is low and dark, and when I say it is really a very decent dungeon, I speak as one who has seen those in the Doge's palace at Venice. But it is a horrible abode for the coarsest and meanest thing that ever wore the shape of man, much more for one of delicate susceptibilities, and elevated fancies. It is low, and has a grated window, and being sunk some feet below the level of the earth, is full of unwholesome damp."

I shall not trace the journey of the Shelleys through Bologna, Rimini, Foligno, along the Via Flaminia, and Terni. But I cannot resist giving an extract from one of his admirable letters to Mr. Peacock, containing a description of the Cascata di Marmore—the fall of the Vellino. "The glacier of, and the source of the Arveiron is the greatest spectacle I ever saw.¹ This is the second. Imagine a river, sixty feet in breadth, with a vast volume of waters, the outlet of a great lake among the [higher] mountains, falling three hundred feet into a sightless gulph of snow-white vapour, which bursts up for ever and for ever from a circle of black crags, and thence leaping downwards, makes five or six other cataracts, each a hundred and fifty feet high, which exhibit, on a smaller scale, and with beautiful and sublime variety, the same appearances. But words, and far less [could] painting, will not express it."

In reading this, I could not help thinking of Wilson's enthusiastic exclamation,—“Well done, water!” and excepting Ruysdael, perhaps no one ever represented on canvass what Shelley goes on to depict. “The ever-

¹ “The glaciers of Montanvert and the source of the Arveiron is the grandest spectacle I ever saw.” Such are the words Shelley wrote to Peacock, on this scene, in his

letter of the 20th of November 1818. Lower down he spoke of the minor cataracts as “each fifty or a hundred feet high.”

moving stream, coming in thick and tawney folds, flaking off like solid snow, gliding down a mountain. The imagination is bewildered with it."

I shall now bring the travellers to Rome.

In his first visit to the capitol [*sic*] of the world, after a hasty glance at its ruins, he passed on to Naples, where he hoped to find in its mild climate, some alleviation of his bodily sufferings, and in the scenery of its bay, a soothing balsam to the wounds of his harassed and weary spirit. But this object was not to be attained. Nor did his excursions to Baiæ prove a "medicine to his mind diseased." I have often heard him dilate with rapture on the beauty of that divine Bay, as he hung over the side of the boat, and gazed on the subaqueous ruins of the wrecked palaces overspread with marine flowering plants and weeds, that grow luxuriantly about them.¹ In speaking of these, he observed that they sympathise, like those on land, with the change of the season. He was a close observer of Nature—and without professing much scientific knowledge unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observation on natural objects, he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of the productions of the Earth—a necessary acquirement for a Poet.

A singular circumstance occurred to Shelley, which, after his death, I talked over with Lord Byron at Pisa—for he was equally acquainted with the story, as told to us mutually, and which he more than once made a subject of conversation with me during my visit to Pisa. The night before his departure from London, in 1814, he received a visit from a married lady, young, handsome, and of noble connections, and whose disappearance from the world of fashion,

¹ See the *Ode to the West Wind* menon,—paraphrased by Medwin
and Shelley's note on this pheno- here both verse and prose.

in which she moved, may furnish to those curious in such inquiries a clue to her identity. The force of love could not go further, when a person so richly endowed, as he described her, could so far forget the delicacy of her sex, and the regard due to the character of woman, as to make the following confession :

“I have long known you in your *Queen Mab*. In the impassioned tenderness of your picture of *Ianthe*, I have read and understood the heart that inspired it. In your uncompromising passion for liberty—your universal and disinterested benevolence—your aspiring after the amelioration of the state of mankind, and the happiness of your species, and more than all, in your sentiments respecting the equality of conditions, and the unfettered union between the sexes,—your virtues, removed from all selfish considerations, and a total disregard of opinion, have made you in my eyes the *beau ideal* of what I have long sought for in vain. I long for the realisation of my day and night dream. I come, after many vain and useless struggles with myself, to tell you that I have renounced my husband, my name, my family and friends ; and have resolved, after mature deliberation, to follow you through the world, to attach my fortune, which is considerable, to yours, in spite of all the obloquy that [may] be cast on me.”

Shelley was at that moment, on the eve, as I have said, of parting from England with one to whom he was devotedly attached ;—none but a perfect gentleman, (and none, as admitted by Byron, surpassed him in the qualities of one,) could have succeeded in acting with a high-born and high-bred woman, a becoming part in such an arduous scene. He could not but feel deep gratitude—admiration without bounds, for that enthusiastic and noble-minded person ; who had not shrunk from a confession—a con-

fession hard indeed for her to have made—an avowal of a love that must have cost her so many struggles to have clothed in words. I shall not endeavour to throw the whole of this interview into dialogue, or to paint the language in which he extricated himself from the painful task of relieving both, by the explanation of his engagement; or in what terms he endeavoured to infuse a balm into her wounded soul, to soothe her hurt pride,—I had almost said, hurt affection. Shelley detailed to me at much length, and with more than his accustomed eloquence, their parting; and though I do not pretend to remember his exact words, their purport has not escaped me.

She said she had listened to his explanation with patience; she ought to listen to it with resignation. The pride of a woman—the pride of a———, might have revolted to acknowledge, much more to feel, that she loved in vain; she said she might conceal all that she endured—might have died under the blow she had received—that death-blow to her heart, and all its hopes, or might spurn him from her with disdain, chase him from her presence with rage, or call to her aid revenge, that cicatrice to a wounded spirit; but that she would rise superior to such littleness. Had she been base—very base—she should no longer have esteemed him,—that she believed herself worthy of him, and would not prove she was otherwise, by leaving on his memory a feeling towards her of contempt. You are rich, she added, in resources; comfort at least by your pity a heart torn by your indifference; lend me some aid to endure the trial you have brought upon me—the greatest it is allotted to one of us to endure—blighted hopes—a life of loneliness—withered affections.

“Cold indeed would have been my heart,” said Shelley

to her, "if I should ever cease to acknowledge with gratitude, the flattering, the undeserved preference you have so nobly confessed to me; the first, the richest gift a woman can bestow—the only one worth having. Adieu, may God protect, support, and bless you! Your image will never cease to be associated in my mind with all that is noble, pure, generous, and lovely. Adieu."

Thus they parted; but this meeting, instead of extinguishing, only seemed to fan the flame in the bosom of the *Incognita*. This infatuated lady followed him to the Continent. He had given her a clue to his place of destination, Geneva. She traced him to Secheron—used to watch him with her glass in his water parties on the lake. On his return to England, he thought she had long forgotten him; but her constancy was untired. During his journey to Rome and Naples, she once lodged with him at the same hotel, *en route*, and finally arrived at the latter city the same day as himself. He must have been more or less than man, to have been unmoved by the devotedness of this unfortunate and infatuated lady. At Naples, he told me that¹ they met and when he learnt from her all those particulars of her wanderings, of which he had been previously ignorant; and at Naples—she died. Mrs. Shelley, who was unacquainted with all those circumstances, in a note to the poems written at Naples, describes what Shelley suffered during this winter, which she attributes solely to physical causes, but which had a far deeper root.

"Constant and poignant physical sufferings," she says, "exhausted him, and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed

¹ Medwin was not at Naples with Shelley, and probably did not intend by this clumsy phrase to deceive the reader.

by illness, became gloomy, and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses which *he hid from me, from fear of wounding me*, poured forth morbid, but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness ;” and she adds, “*that it was difficult to imagine that any melancholy he shewed, was aught but the effect of the constant pain to which he was a martyr.*”

Had she been able to disentangle the threads of the mystery, she would have attributed his feelings to more than purely physical causes. Among the verses which she had probably never seen till they appeared in print, was the *Invocation to Misery*, an idea taken from Shakspeare—Making Love to Misery, betokening his soul lacerated to rawness by the tragic event above detailed—the death of his unknown adorer. The state of his mind must indeed have been bordering on madness—hanging on the devouring edge of mental darkness, when he could give utterance to those wonderful lines :—

Hasten to the bridal bed !
Underneath the grave 'tis spread !
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid !
We may rest, and none forbid.

Kiss me ! Oh ! thy lips are cold !
Round my neck thine arms enfold,
They are *soft*—yet chill and dead,
And thy tears upon my head,
Burn like points of frozen lead.

The epithet *soft* in the last stanza, and *burn like points of frozen lead*, surpass in the sublimity of horror, anything in our own, or any other language.

This poem was shewn to me by Shelley in 1821, and by his permission, with many others, copied into my common-place book, and appeared for the first time in the Shelley papers in 1833.¹

¹ This is perhaps near enough, though the *first* appearance of the poem was in *The Athenæum* of 1832,

p. 586. Above, the two stanzas are transposed.

Not less affecting are the *Lines Written In Despondency*.* How horrible is the calm in the tempest of his affliction—how exquisite the pathos conveyed by the closing stanza :—

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are.
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away this life of care,
Which I have borne, and yet must bear,
Till Death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air,
My heart grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my *outworn* brain its last monotony.

The line stands thus in my copy—*outworn* for dying. And again, after her death, whether a violent or a natural one I know not, what a desolation of spirit there is in—

I sit upon the sands alone—
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me—and a tone
Arises from its mingled motion,
How sweet! *if any heart could share in my emotion.*

These poems affect me like the slow movement in some of the Sonatas of Beethoven—and the oftener they are read, affect me the deeper, as is the case with the unutterable tenderness and beauty of the Symphonies of that incomparable composer.

* Mrs. Shelley has omitted a line in the transcript of a stanza of this poem. It stood thus :—

Blue hills and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might,—
The breath of the west wind is light, &c.

There is a word also in the *Ode to a Cloud* the last in the poem, which spoils the whole—*unbuild* for *upbuild*—It imperatively demands emendation.¹

¹ Mrs. Shelley reads *moist air*, not *west wind*, of which the authenticity needs establishing. Medwin had just been “cribbing” in the *West*

Wind, and may have had West Wind “on the brain.” His preference of *upbuild* for *unbuild* is preposterous.

I imagine also that we owe the beautiful gem entitled *To a Faded Violet*, which made its first appearance anonymously, in, I think, *The Indicator*,¹ to this occurrence.

A withered, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandoned breast,
And mocks the heart that yet is warm,
With cold and silent rest.
I weep—my tears revive it not.
I sigh—it breathes none back to me.
Its mute and uncomplaining lot
Is such as mine must be.

There are also some exquisite stanzas, with the Epigraph of "The queen of my heart," which Mrs. Shelley will not admit to be Shelley's but of whose paternity there can be no doubt, most probably addressed to that unfortunate Lady, and which as they are not included in his works, well deserve a place here. They are admirably adapted for music.

Shelley told me that his departure from Naples was precipitated by this event. The letters he wrote from thence furnish another among the many proofs what an imperfect and little-to-be-trusted medium they are for biography. Who would have supposed from their tenor, that his mind was subject to any extraordinary excitement? Retreading his steps through the Pontine marshes, so graphically described in his Fragment *Mazenghi*,² as,

Deserted by the fever-stricken serf,
All overgrown with weeds and long rank grasses,
And where the huge and speckled aloe made,
Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,

he reached Rome for the second time in March, 1819, and there took up his abode, having completed, before his

¹ It was in *The Literary Pocket-Book* for 1821. This version of Medwin's differs from others, suggests an independent manuscript source,

and should be consulted by editors.

² In the original published *Life*, *Mazinghi*. *Mazenghi* is substituted in MS. It should be *Marenghi*.

departure, the first Act of his *Prometheus Unbound* commenced at Este. His impressions of the City of the World, as contained in his communications to Mr. Peacock, are clothed in such glowing and eloquent language, as to make us regret that their correspondence should so soon have been discontinued; for with the exception of about eighteen letters addressed to that gentleman, although everything he writes is valuable, as tending to develope his life and character, the remaining forty-nine are of very inferior interest. Nor is it less remarkable that during more than 4 years he should have had scarcely [any but] men correspondents.

There is something inspiring in the very atmosphere of Rome. Is it fanciful, that being encircled with images of beauty—that in contemplating works of beauty, such as Rome and the Vatican can only boast—that by gazing on the scattered limbs of that mighty Colossus, whose shadow eclipsed the world,—we should catch a portion of the sublime—become a portion of that around us?

Schiller, in his *Don Carlos*, makes Posa say,—

In his Escorial

The Artist sees, and gloats upon some work
Of art divine, till he becomes a part
Of its identity.

Certain it is, that such produce at Rome, what they are incapable of conceiving elsewhere, and at which they are themselves most sincerely astonished.

The mind becomes that which it contemplates.

No wonder, then, that Shelley should here have surpassed himself in all that he produced. He drenched his spirit to intoxication in the deep-blue sky of Rome. Among his haunts were the baths of Caracalla. Situate as they are at a considerable distance outside the present

walls of Rome, they are but little frequented, and their solitude made them an especial favourite with the poet. He seems to have known "all the intricate labyrinths of the ruins, and to have traced every narrow and ill-defined footpath that winds among their entangled wilderness of myrtle, myrletus, and bay, and flowering laurestinus, and a thousand nameless plants, sown by the wandering winds—an undecaying investiture of Nature, to soften down their vast desolation." Here, he told me, he completed two more acts of his *Prometheus*.

The chorus in the second act, scene 2, was doubtless inspired by this scene.

Some cloud of dew
 Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
 Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
 Hangs each a pearl on the pale flowers
 Of the green laurel, blown anew,
 And bends, and then fades silently
 One frail and fair anemone.
 And when some star of many a one
 That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,
 Has found the cleft, through which alone
 Beams fall from high those depths upon,
 Ere it is borne away, away,
 By the swift heavens, that cannot stay,
 It scatters drops of golden light,
 Like lines of rain that ne'er unite;
 And the gloom divine is all around,
 And underneath is the mossy ground.

But the Praxitelean shapes of the Vatican and the Capitol, were alike sources whence he drew his inspiration in this truly classical drama; a bold and successful attempt, not so much to revive a lost play of Æschylus, as to make the allegory a medium for developing his abstruse and imaginative theories—an object he never lost sight of in any of his poems. The last Act, a hymn

of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecy regarding Prometheus, was not conceived or executed till several months later, at Florence. Mrs. Shelley has given so excellent an analysis of this drama, that it would be vain for me to attempt it. Shelley believed, with Schiller, that mankind had only to will, and that there should be no evil, and would be none. That man could be so perfectionised as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of creation, was the cardinal point of his system; and he had so conquered himself, and his own passions, that he was a living testimony to the truth of his doctrine. Such he had depicted Laon, the enemy and victim of tyranny in *The Revolt of Islam*, and here took a more idealised image of the same subject in *Prometheus*, typifying a being full of fortitude and hope, and the spirit of triumph, emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of good. There was one point on which I had several discussions with Shelley, his introduction of the Furies into his sublime drama. These allegorical personages of the Greek mythology, I contended, ought to have had no place in his *Prometheus*. Their attributes were widely different from those which should have been called into exercise. They properly formed a prominent feature in the machinery of the Orestian story, and Schiller admirably introduces them in his *Cranes of Ibychus*, but Jove knew that Prometheus was beyond their power. His conscience must have been at rest, he had nothing to unsay or wish undone; all their tortures must have been ineffectual as against the Fire-bearer, and well might Earth exclaim, when Prometheus says, "It doth repent me,"—

Misery! O Misery!

That Jove at length has vanquished thee!

I cannot help thinking that Bia and Cratos, the agents of the new ruler of Olympus, as employed by Vulcan in the *Prometheus Bound*, would have been fitter instruments of the tyrant, and much more appropriate engines in the hands of Mercury. One objection certainly is, that after the first scene of that wonderful drama, it would have been an arrant failure, and daring plagiarism, to have made them speak; for what words would not have been a pale adumbration of that which Shelley knew to be inimitable?

Not to dwell on this—I will add, that with all its choral magnificence, a strain of inspiration that is totally unreachably by the greatest spirits of this or any other age, this sublime poem fell almost dead from the press. A literary man, who has without a tythe of his genius obtained a hundredfold more reputation, with a sneer said to me—“*Prometheus Unbound*. It is well named. Who would bind it?”¹ Such is the kind of criticism with which, even by persons of enlarged education, but most narrow minds, this lyrical drama was received.

¹ Was Medwin really the original recipient of this platitude, from one who stole it? As an epigram in verse it did not look so dull in the corner of *John Bull* wherein it appeared at the time of the book's publication; and its author, under the pseudonym of Steropes, thought it worth a place in a little volume of miscellanies in verse and prose called *Sweepings of Parnassus* (1830). Here follows the said epigram:

On Bysshe Shelley's
“*Prometheus Unbound*.”

Shelley styles his new poem,
Prometheus Unbound,
And 'tis like to remain so while
time circles round;
For surely an age would be spent
in the finding

A reader so weak as to pay for
the binding.

Steropes, though something too much of a wag to be treated seriously in respect of his sweepings, took himself sufficiently in earnest to end his collection with a *Carmen Valedictorium*, of which the last two lines may be fitly extracted:

To you, kind readers of my
humble strain,
To you, I plead, and not, I trust,
in vain.

Humility was one of the last things of which this lively gentleman was likely to be accused, at all events on the evidence of the *Sweepings*. What else he wrote is at present a topic of conjecture. His appeal

But the Thermæ of Caracalla had other haunts to divide Shelley's affections: he has left us a picture of the Coliseum, which, though in prose, surpasses all metrical poetry; and here it was that he laid the scene of a tale that promised to rival Corinne. Like Madame de Staël, he meant to idealize himself in the chief personage; and there were times when the portrait was not overcharged, and which I shall give in the words of that fragment.

"A figure only visible at Rome at night, or in solitude, and then only to be seen amid the dilapidated temples of the Forum, or gliding away through the weed-grown galleries of the Coliseum, crossed their path. His face, though emaciated, displayed the elementary outline of exquisite grace. It was a face once seen never to be forgotten. The mouth and the moulding of the chin resembled the eager and impassioned tenderness of the statues of Antinous, but instead of the effeminate sullenness of the eye, and the narrow smoothness of the forehead, there was an expression of profound and piercing thought. The brow was clear and open, and his eyes deep, like two wells of crystal water that reflect the all-beholding heavens. Over all was spread a timid expression of diffidence and retirement, that contrasted strangely with the abstract and fearless character which predominated in his form and gestures. He avoided, in an extraordinary degree, what is called society, but was occasionally seen to converse with some accomplished foreigner, whose

to "kind readers" has induced one not so very kind reader, a wag too in his way, to inscribe in my copy of the *Sweepings* the following sedate couplets:—

Great Cloacina, bring your broom
And sweep these sweepings to their
doom!

You, Steropes were long forgot
But for that epigram you shot
At one who soared too high for
you

Or any of the carping crew.
Collectors may conceal your book
In some not much frequented nook
Just for the wit of what you wrote

On Shelley, ere the accurséd boat
'Don Juan' bore him 'neath the sea
To solve the final mystery.

Prometheus yet remains Unbound
Whene'er in virgin state 'tis found,
Because, in bibliopolic hoards,
'Tis worth its weight of gold in
boards,—

Since Shelley's lovers love to see
That tome of master-minstrelsy
Just as the folk beheld it first
When on a thankless world it
burst—

To bide the time when Phoebus
spread
A throne for the immortal dead.

appearance might attract him in his solemn haunts. He spoke Italian with fluency, though with a peculiar but sweet accent."

This fragment he allowed me to copy, and I have always looked upon it as on the Torso of some exquisite statue, and during the visits that at different periods I have made to Rome, I read it as many times, sitting, as he says, "on some isolated capital of a fallen column in the arena," and ever with a new delight. It is worth all that "Nibbi" and Hobhouse and Eustace with their shew-knowledge, the common stuff of the earth, the very slime of pedantry, "have left behind them."

Shelley's taste and feeling in works of ancient art, were, as might be supposed, most refined. Statuary was his passion. He contended that "the slaughter-house and the dissecting-room were not the sources whence the Greeks drew their inspiration. It was to be attributed to the daily exhibitions of the human form in all its ease and symmetry in their gymnasia. The sculptors were not mere mechanics—they were citizens and soldiers, animated with the love of their country." "We must rival them in their virtues," he adds, "before we can come up to them in their compositions." "The human form and the human mind," he also says in his Preface to *Hellas* "attained a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses that cannot cease th[r]ough a thousand channels of manifest and imperishable¹ operation to ennoble and delight mankind." The hard, harsh, affected style of the French school, and Canova, he could never

¹ The extract is badly copied. In especial, the words *and imperishable* have been substituted for *or imperceptible*.

endure, and used to contrast what are considered the masterpieces of the latter with those of the age of Pericles, where the outline of the form and features is, as in one of Sir Joshua Reynolds's pictures, so soft as scarcely to be traceable by the eye. He considered the Perseus so ridiculously overpraised by Forsyth, a bad imitation of the Apollo, and said, after seeing the great conceited figurante of the Pitti, Canova's Venus, "Go and visit the modest little creature of the Tribune."

I have not yet spoken of the work which occupied him at Rome—the greatest tragedy of modern times, *The Cenci*. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* has said that Shelley "selected the story on account of its horrors, and that he found pleasure in dwelling on those horrors." Never did a reviewer more thoroughly misunderstand or misinterpret an author. Shelley's loadstar was the Barberini Beatrice. The tragedy ought to have been entitled *Beatrice Cenci*,¹ for this is the prominent character. In her we see depicted what may be called the fanaticism of innocence. She has no doubts, no scruples before the murder, nor timidity when the blow was to be struck, nor remorse, when her vengeance accomplished, left her time for reflexion. She is placed above all human laws, she has cast off, as garments out of use, the prejudices of sex, and family, she obeys blindly the fatality which drives her on, and dies condemned but not culpable in her own eyes.—In her we behold the Angel of Parricide, to make use of an expression applied to Charlotte Corday by a poet historian—an Angel resplendent in beauty and courage,

¹ *The Cenci* would signify equally well the Count or his daughter, or indeed all the family. As a matter of fact the extant draft preface contains evidence that Shelley had

rejected a title making the family give its name to the tragedy. The cancelled opening phrase is "The Story upon which the 'Family of the Cenci' is written . . ."

and whom her very accomplices dare not to accuse, as long as they remain under the fascination of her gaze. The Cenci himself, his atrocious crimes and abhorrent vices, are treated as if he shrunk from, as though there was almost a pollution, not in the mention of, but the bare thought of them. It cannot be denied also, that in the Cenci he found materials for developing his system, so forcibly dilated on in the preface,—The Spirit of Romanism. Whilst writing it, he told me that he heard in the street the oft repeated cry, “Cenci, Cenci,” which he at first thought the echo of his own soul, but soon learnt was one of the cries of Rome—Cenci meaning old rags.

But to be serious,—a MS. containing an account of this *cause célèbre* had been seen by Shelley, it appears, before he came to Rome. There is scarcely a public library in Italy that does not contain such a MS. I found one in the Berio at Genoa, bound up with another almost as remarkable trial, that of Mascalbruni, the Treasurer of Innocent X.—and in that pope we see the reflex of Clement VIII. in his corruption, and more still in the Cenci’s *peculiar* profligacy; and to those who wish to make a good magazine article, I would recommend them the perusal of this latter process. The church of Rome, and God’s vicegerent upon earth, are not spared in the Narrative.

To return to the Cenci.—Just as I was about to speak of Shelley’s *Cenci*, was placed in my hand an *Indicator* of July 26, 1820; and when I had read that masterly critique, one of the noblest pieces of writing in our language, I abandoned as hopeless the task of analysing it myself. Almost every line of that tragedy might be quoted, and indeed very many have been, but there is a passage which was pointed out to me by a great writer, which escaped

Leigh Hunt's observation, and strikes me as most profound. It is Cenci's first speech to the Cardinal emissary of the pope.¹

The third of my possessions—
Aye, I have heard the nephew of the pope
Had sent his architect to view the ground,
Meaning to build a villa on my vines,
The next time I compounded with his uncle,—
I little thought he should outwit me so.

Leigh Hunt, the theatrical critic, *κατ' ἐξοχην*, sums up his paper with,—

“Mr. Shelley in this work reminds us of some of the most strenuous and daring of our old dramatists,—not by any means as an imitator, though he has studied them, but as a bold, elemental imaginator, and a framer of mighty lines. He possesses also, moreover, what those to whom we more particularly allude, did not possess, great sweetness of nature, and enthusiasm for good, and his style is as it ought to be, the offspring of the high mixtures. It disproves the adage of the Latin poet. Majesty and love do sit on one throne in the lofty buildings of his poetry, and they will be found there at a late, and we trust happier day, on a seat immortal as themselves.”

Words written with the prophetic confidence of their truth.

Shelley had formed strong hopes of getting this play performed at Covent Garden, and that Miss O'Neil, whom he had seen before leaving London, and often spoke of as his *beau idéal* of female actors, would take the part of Beatrice, but that she should have been in his thoughts as Mrs. Shelley says she was in working out that character (after the manner of the Playwrights of the age) is unlikely—he was too much absorbed in his subject till its completion to think of Miss O'Neil. His

¹ The profundity does not seem to be increased by omitting the complement of the first line—“let it go!”—or by printing “have heard” for “once heard.”

disappointment was great, when Mr. Harris pronounced the subject so objectionable that he could not submit the part to that gifted lady, but expressed a desire that the author should write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. The manager was right in thinking that *The Cenci* was unadapted for the stage. If no one can read it without shedding abundant tears, who could have endured the representation of the character of Beatrice by Miss O'Neil? Of this Shelley himself seems to have been conscious, when he says, "God forbid I should ever see her play it—it would tear my nerves to tatters."¹ Who could have borne to listen to—

Here, mother! tie
My girdle for me—and bind up this hair
In any simple knot. Aye! that does well—
And yours I see is coming down. How often
Have we done this for one another, now
We shall not do it any more.

The play was so disfigured by the mistakes that had crept into it in the London edition, that he reprinted it at Leghorn,² and sent me a copy, which I received in Switzerland at the Baths of Louche overhung by the frightful precipices and glaciers of the Gemmi which furnished the scene of Werner's harrowing Domestic Tragedy, which I was then reading and, only half completed, laid down to devour [*The Cenci*] with an all absorbing interest.

Mrs. Shelley says, "it is to be lamented that he did not employ himself on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, and leave the delineation of human

¹ Shelley says "to pieces," not "to tatters." See letter of July 1819 to Peacock.

² The fact represented by this

fable is that the book was printed in the first instance at Livorno, and that a second edition was well printed in London.

passion, which he could depict in such an able manner, for fantastic creations, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments with regard to human nature, and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master-passion of his soul." I cannot agree with her. It would have been a vain attempt to turn his mind from the bent of its natural inclinations. He told me, that it was with the greatest possible effort, and struggle with himself, that he could be brought to write *The Cenci*; and great as is that tragedy, his fame must rest not on it, but on his mighty Rhymes, the deep-felt inspiration of his Choral Melodies. I shall hereafter have to speak of his *Charles I.*, which at the earnest request of others he commenced, but which nothing could so far conquer his repugnance as to accomplish.

The Shelleys suffered a severe affliction at Rome, by the death of their son William. His love, and regret for the loss of this child, may be seen by a fragment which he epigraphs with "*Roma, Roma, Roma, non e piu come era prima*;" and he alludes to this interesting boy in *The Cenci*.—

That fair blue-eyed child,
Who was the loadstar of our life—
All see since his most piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth and time,
And all the things hoped for and done therein,
Are changed to you through your exceeding grief.¹

Rome was, as he says, become no longer Rome to him, and he was anxious to escape a spot associated too inti-

¹ Medwin's genius for ruining the finest passages of poetry by mis-transcription is well exemplified here. We should read *your* for *our*, and, after *life*, thus—

and though

All see, since his most swift and
piteous death
That day and night, and heaven
and earth, and time,
And all the things hoped for or
done therein, . . .

mately with his child's presence and loss. Some friends of theirs being resident in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, they took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half way between that town and Monte Nero, where they remained during the summer. Mrs. Shelley gives a very interesting picture of the manner of life and study which her husband pursued at this villa, where he put a finishing hand to *The Cenci*, and studied Calderon, from whose *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*, the description of the mountain pass, where the murder was to have been committed—(none could be more adapted for such a purpose) was taken.

The poet, in the latter part of the year, migrated to Florence. Here, after his severe mental sufferings, though his physical ones were unabated, he enjoyed some repose, and luxuriated in the divine creations of Grecian art.

He was a constant visitor to the Uffizi gallery. Schiller has left us, in the *Brief eines residenten Danes*, a sketch, and a valuable one, of many antiques. "An invisible hand," he says, "lifts the veil of the past, and thou standest in the midst of smiling, beautiful Greece, and wanderest among bowers and groves, and worshippest, as it, the Gods of Fable." But the German poet's descriptions of the Niobe and the Apollo, and the Dancing Faun, and the Medicean Venus, are pale and lifeless, compared with those which may be found in Shelley's Posthumous Works. But there are two groups which Mrs. Shelley has omitted in her Work of Love, and which I shall give in his own words—premising them by saying that these notes were written in pencil, and thrown off in the gallery, in a burst of enthusiasm, proving that thoughts struck out in the fire of the moment, have a more inherent force

of truth—give birth to a natural eloquence that defies all that study and after meditation can produce.

Of the Laocoön he says,—

“The subject of the Laocoön is a disagreeable one, but whether we consider the grouping, or the execution, nothing that remains to us of antiquity can surpass it. It consists of a father and his two sons. Byron thinks that Laocoön’s anguish is absorbed in that of his children, that a mortal’s agony is blending with an immortal’s patience. Not so. Intense physical suffering, against which he pleads with an up-raised countenance of despair, and appeals with a sense of its injustice, seems the predominant and overwhelming emotion, and yet there is a nobleness in the expression, and a majesty that dignifies torture.

“We now come to his children. Their features and attitudes indicate the excess of the filial love and devotion that animates them, and swallows up all other feelings. In the elder of the two, this is particularly observable. His eyes are fixedly bent on Laocoön—his whole soul is with—is a part of that of his father. His arm extended towards him, not for protection, but from a wish as if instinctively to afford it, absolutely speaks. Nothing can be more exquisite than the contour of his form and face, and the moulding of his lips, that are half open, as if in the act of—not uttering any unbecoming complaint, or prayer or lamentation, which he is conscious are alike useless—but addressing words of consolatory tenderness to his unfortunate parent. The intensity of his bodily torments is only expressed by the uplifting of his right foot, which he is vainly and impotently attempting to extricate from the grasp of the mighty folds in which it is entangled.

“In the younger child, surprise, pain, and grief seem to contend for mastery. He is not yet arrived at an age when his mind has sufficient self-possession, or fixedness of reason, to analyse the calamity that is overwhelming himself and all that is dear to him. He is sick with pain and horror. We almost seem to hear his shrieks. His left hand is on the head of the snake, that is burying its fangs in his side, and the vain and fruitless attempt he is making to disengage it, increases the effect. Every limb, every muscle, every vein of Laocoön expresses, with the fidelity of life, the working of the poison, and the strained girding round of the inextricable folds, whose tangling sinuosities are too numerous and complicated to be followed. No chisel has ever displayed with such anatomical fidelity and force, the projecting muscles of the arm, whose hand clenches the neck of

the reptile, almost to strangulation, and the mouth of the enormous asp, and his terrible fangs widely displayed, in a moment to penetrate and meet within its victim's heart, make the spectator of this miracle of sculpture, turn away with shuddering and awe, and doubt the reality of what he sees."

Not less charming are Shelley's remarks on the group of the Bacchus and Ampelus in the same gallery.

"Look! the figures are walking as it were with a sauntering and idle pace, and talking to each other as they walk, and this is expressed in the motion of their delicate and glowing forms. One arm of Bacchus rests with its entire weight on the shoulder of Ampelus, the other, the fingers being gently curved, as with the living spirit that animates the flexible joints, is gracefully thrown forward to correspond with the advance of the opposite leg. He has sandals, and buskins clasped with two serpents' heads, and his leg is cinctured with their skins. He is crowned with vine-leaves, laden with their crude fruit, and the crisp leaves hang with the inertness of a faded leaf over his neck and massy, profuse, down-hanging hair, which gracefully divided on his forehead, falls in delicate wreaths on each side his neck, and curls upon the breast. Ampelus, with a young lion's or lynx's skin over his shoulders, holds a cup in his right hand and with his left half encircles Bacchus, as you may have seen a younger and an elder boy at school, walking in some grassy spot of the playground, with that tender friendship for each other that the age inspires. The countenance of Bacchus is sublimely sweet and lovely, taking a shade of gentle and playful tenderness from the arch looks of Ampelus, whose cheerful face turned towards him, expresses the suggestion of some droll and merry device. It has a divine and supernatural beauty, as one who walks through the world untouched by its corrupting cares. It looks like one who unconsciously confers pleasure and peace. The countenance of Ampelus is in some respects boyish and inferior, that of Bacchus expresses an imperturbable and godlike self-possession—he seems in the enjoyment of a calm delight, that nothing can destroy. His is immortal beauty."

In this city he saw one of those republics that opposed for some time a systematic and effectual resistance to all the surrounding tyranny of popedom and despotism. "The Lombard League," he says, "defeated the arms of the despot in the field, and until Florence was betrayed

into the hands of those polished tyrants the Medici, freedom had one citadel, where it could find refuge from a world that was its foe." To this cause he attributed the undisputed superiority of Italy in literature and the arts, above all its contemporaries; the union and energy and beauty which distinguish from all other poets the writings of Dante; the restlessness of fervid power which surpassed itself in painting and sculpture, and from which Raphael and Michael Angelo drew their inspiration.

It was during his stay in Florence, that he first saw the critique in *The Quarterly Review* of 1818, on his *Laon and Cythna, or a [sic for the] Revolution of the Golden City, a Vision of the Nineteenth Century*, as it was first entitled; better known as *The Revolt of Islam*; a review, be it here said, that has always endeavoured to crush rising talent—never done justice to one individual, whose opinions did not square with its own in religion or politics.

A friend of mine, the late Lord Dillon, mentioned to me an anecdote of Shelley, with reference to the article in question, which is too characteristic to be passed over in silence. His lordship observed at Delesert's reading-room, a young man very earnestly bent over the last *Quarterly*. It was Shelley, and when he came to the end of the paper, to the irresistibly ludicrous comparison of himself to Pharaoh, where the Crispinus pompously says, "Like the Egyptians of old, the wheels of his chariot are broken, the path of mighty waters closes in from behind, a still deepening ocean is before him, for a short time are seen his impotent struggles against a resistless power, his blasphemous execrations are heard, his despair, but he poorly assumes the tone of triumph and defiance, and he calls ineffectually on others to follow him in the same ruin, finally he sinks *like lead* to be forgotten"—when he

came to this specimen of bathos, this stick after the explosion of the rocket, Shelley burst into a convulsive laughter, closed the book with an hysteric laugh, and hastily left the room, his Ha! ha's ringing down the stairs.

As *The Edinburgh Review* was unprophectic as to Byron, its great rival's predictions about Shelley were equally falsified. It has been the crying evil of all times, that early genius has been ever depressed. There is scarcely a great poet from the time of Milton, down to the present day, who has not proved a mark for the invidious malice of his contemporaries. But among all authors of a past or present age, none has been more unjustly handled than Shelley, as this April number before me testifies. If it was written, as Byron supposed, by one who afterwards borrowed most largely from him whom he vituperates, and who has been raised far above his petty standard—elevated on stilts—in the pages of that very *veridical* review which assumes to be the oracle and guide of literature, his depreciation of one whom he feared might one day make him hide his own diminished head, will be more easily intelligible, though the condemnation of his scepticism came with an ill grace from an individual, and that person* a priest, who has since endeavoured in a

* An anonymous libeller in *Blackwood*, who signs himself "Hanoveriensis," (*quære* John Cam Hobhouse,) says, "He (Lord Byron) represents Milman as the author on Shelley in the *Quarterly Review*. This must be a vague guess of Captain Medwin's, for Lord Byron knew from the best authority, that it was written by a nephew of Coleridge." This is one of Hobhouse's knock-me-down assertions, and probably as false as most of them. Did he never see the Don Juan expunged stanzas, about "a priest almost a priest"? Lord Byron frequently expressed to Shelley and myself a different conviction. How much, if Hobhouse is right about the paternity, must the great Coleridge have blushed at his degenerate relative!¹

¹ The transition from surmise to certainty in the narrow compass of a foot-note is characteristic. And why should such a pseudonym as

more systematic way, to sap the very foundations of Christianity, by depriving of its prophetic character, the Old Testament, and resolving all its miracles into the effects of natural causes. Poetry—at least poetry of so high and metaphysical a kind as that of Shelley—his idealisms of Intellectual Beauty and Universal Love, his Speculations respecting the Misgovernment of the World, and the Causes of the existing Evils in the Institutions of Society, however founded on his own construction of the Necessity of a Change—a Revolt of Islam—were, as the reviewer himself confesses, harmless; for he admits, “that of all his brethren, Mr. Shelley carries to the greatest length the doctrines of his sect,” and he adds, “that he is, from this, and other reasons, by far the least pernicious of them, indeed that there is a *naïveté* and an openness in his manner of laying down the most extraordinary positions, which in some degree deprive them of

“Hanoveriensis” be employed by John Cam Hobhouse? The “anonymous libeller” to whom Medwin refers wrote a letter “to the Editors of *Blackwood’s Magazine*” about the *Conversations of Lord Byron* and signed himself “Yours, ever faithfully, Harroviensis.” This was inserted in November 1824 after *Blackwood’s* review of the same work, and might have been by any Harrow boy come to maturity; but “Harroviensis” was not making his first appearance under that name: he had already taken part in the *Cain* controversy, as the author of an important and now somewhat scarce pamphlet entitled “A | Letter | to | Sir Walter Scott, Bart. | In Answer to the Remonstrance | of Oxoniensis | on the Publication of *Cain*, a Mystery, | by | Lord Byron. | London: | Printed for Rodwell and Martin, | Bond Street, | 1822.” So good did Byron think that pamphlet that he made

repeated enquiries as to its authorship, and urged Murray to reprint it with *Cain*; but, as far as I know, the writer has managed to keep the secret of his identity till the present day. So much for “Hanoveriensis” and Hobhouse in *Blackwood’s Magazine*! Now as to the *Quarterly* article on *Laon and Cythna*: the statement of “Harroviensis” about a nephew of Coleridge was correct; and there is no reason for doubting that Byron got the information. If he had no special motive for misleading Medwin on this point, he may have told him the truth and left him to mix up the history of the two articles after his own fashion. That on *Laon and Cythna* is now generally known as the work of John Taylor Coleridge, afterwards a King’s Bench Judge, a privy councillor, and biographer of Keble of *The Christian Year*. The Right Honourable Sir J. T. C. had been at Eton with Shelley.

their venom; and when he enlarges on what are but necessary results of systems more gradually detailed by others, he might almost be mistaken for an *artful advocate of civil order and religious institutions.*"

And yet, with this admission of the uninjurious tendency of this poem, and the unwillingly extorted admission of its beauty, he endeavours to persuade himself that it can never become popular, on the ground that its merits and faults equally conspire against it, for it *has not much ribaldry or voluptuousness for prurient imaginations, and no personal scandal for the malicious.* High merits, at all events. But it is clear that The Divine is not quite satisfied in his own mind, that his leaden shafts will be effectual to crush his formidable rival, and thinks the most effectual way of preventing his book from getting into the hands of readers, is to calumniate the man—and no one knew him less; to begin by saying, "He was a very vain man, that his speculations and disappointments began in early childhood, and that even from that period he carried about with him a soured and discontented spirit—in boyhood unamiable, in youth querulous, and unmanly in manhood. Singularly unhappy in all three." Adding, "He speaks of his school as a world of woes, of his masters as tyrants, of his schoolfellows as enemies. Alas! what is this but to bear evidence against himself? Every one who knows what a public school must be, will only trace in these lines an insubordinate, a vain, and mortified spirit."

If there be any fidelity in the picture which I have drawn of Shelley, from his childhood through his boyhood, and up to his manhood, the falsehood of this summing up of his character at this period will be self-apparent. Shelley does not so much speak of the public school of

Eton, when he alludes to his world of woes, tyrants and enemies, as of another establishment. He never carried about with him a soured or discontented spirit. His melancholy was that of meditation and abstraction, not misanthropy. He was not unteachable as a boy, or how did he acquire his knowledge; he was not unamiable, no boy was ever more affectionate; and although he entered into no manly sports, from the delicacy of his constitution, no one was more playful and sportive; nor was he querulous and unmanly in manhood.

As Æschylus makes Prometheus pathetically say,—

'Tis easy
For one whose path of life is free from cares
And sorrows, to give counsel, and find words
Of sharp reproof to tax with evil those
Who walk in misery.

It is a passage I have often heard him quote, on realising the evil augury, that inspired the following lines:—

'Tis mournful when the deadliest hate
Of friends and fortune and of fate,
Is levelled at one fated head.

His first ill-assorted and ill-judged marriage brought with it miseries, and left behind it wounds, that smarted indeed, but never festered his spirit. Misery was to him a crucible for purifying the ore of humanity. It begat in him a more exceeding love for all that was lovely—an universal philanthropy. Even for the author of this unworthy and disgraceful lampoon, he entertained no hatred, and says in some lines addressed to the reviewer,—

Alas! good friend, what profit can you see,
In hating such a hateless thing as me?
There is no spirit [*sic* for *spirit*] in hate, when all the rage
Is on one side—in vain would you assuage

Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
In which not even contempt lurks, &c.

And in other stanzas, entitled *To a Critic*, he ends with—

I hate the [*sic* for *thy*] want of truth and love—
How should I then hate thee!

How forcibly does Shelley remind us of Plato, who when written to by Dionysius to spare him,—that Dionysius who had sold him for a slave, replied, that he had no time to think of Dionysius.

To the effect of this attack on Shelley's life and prospects, I shall hereafter allude. Its venom was scattered far and wide. It worked well. The detractor knew what he was about. The moral English public are apt to associate the man with his works; and the consequence was, that this sublime poem, published at Shelley's own expense, fell almost still-born from the press.

On the eve of my departure from Bombay, in October 1818, I met in the bazaar, at a Parsee book-stall, with a copy of *The Revolt of Islam*. It had been shipped with other unsaleable literary commodities—for it is the habit of the purchasers at the trade sales, to send out such wares to the colonies,—and I purchased it for little more than its value in waste paper, with which it was the fate of that sublime Poem to line many a trunk, and furnish wrappers for the grocer. Young men on quitting school and college, lead a life of so much adventure, are so much absorbed in the pursuits and occupations of active life, that they know not till some circumstance brings back the past, how much regard they entertain for each other. I had, it is true, heard of the result of his first unhappy marriage, but his second union was new to me, and the Introduction, full of beauty and feeling, and the allusions

in it to his school life, reawakened my sympathies, and revived all my dormant affections. But if I yearned to see him again, and anticipated the period of our meeting once more with delight, I was astonished at the greatness of his genius, and made the volume the companion of my journey, delighting to trace in it the elements of his young mind down to their complete development, as in a chart we love to follow the course of some river whose source we have visited. On my return he was the first person I wrote to, and found that he had not forgotten the companion of his boyhood. His letters breathed the same warmth of regard which he had ever entertained for me, and they contained an invitation to visit him at Florence, where I at first addressed him, he having quitted England little more than a year before I landed at Liverpool. How much do I regret the loss of these letters!

I will beg the reader to excuse this extraneous matter, and take up the thread of Shelley's wanderings—returning to Florence, where he passed the autumn and part of the winter of 1819.

Florence the magnificent, with its fortified palaces—its Piazza Vecchia, crowded with statues, its Santa Croce, and Cascine and Gardens, and splendid galleries, realized all Shelley's dreams; and here probably he would have taken up his permanent residence, but for the climate, which he considered highly detrimental to his health. Those who know that city, will have experienced the keen, dry, piercing winds, that sweep down from the Apennines, interpenetrate, and pierce like a sword through the system, tearing every nerve to tatters. They acted on Shelley's sensitive frame most prejudicially.

On the 25th of January, having put a finishing hand to the third act of his *Prometheus*, and written his *Ode to the*

West Wind, and the sublime stanzas on the Medusa shield, he embarked for Pisa,—a most original way of making the journey, which by the tortuous Arno must have been very slow and tedious. His love of boating, however, prevailed over considerations of comfort in travelling, and he thought that, suffering as he was from his complaint, he could better bear the motion of a boat, than of a carriage, and he anticipated, even at that season, “the delights of the sky, the river, and the mountains.”

His first impression of Pisa, as appears by one of his letters, had not been very favourable, but it being in a hollow, and sheltered from the Tramontana, decided him to make it hereafter his winter place of abode. Another inducement was the water—the best in Italy, which is brought from the mountains by an aqueduct, whose long line of arches reminded him of the Campagna.

In the spring he stopped a week or two near Leghorn, with his friends the Gisbornes, and it was on a beautiful evening, while wandering among the lanes, where myrtle hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that he heard the carolling of the skylark, which inspired one of his most beautiful poems. Nothing can be better chosen than the measure of the Stanza, which rapid in the first four lines, ends in a long stream of harmony, a never ending sinuosity of sweetness. The images which he uses to illustrate the charm of the bird's strain succeed each other, in the happiest climax, and the moral drawn naturally from the subject leaves an inextinguishable melancholy—

We look before and after
And sigh [*sic* for *pine*] for what is not,
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught,
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

They spent the summer at the baths of St. Julian, four miles from Pisa, at the foot of the hill, whose intervening brow

Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye.*

I shall now bring myself in near contact with him, hoping to be excused any autobiographical matter that may creep into my narrative.¹

It was late in the autumn of 1820, when, at Shelley's invitation to pass the winter with him, I left Geneva, and journeyed so leisurely, that on reaching Pisa, which in his last Letter he had fixed as our place of meeting I found he was gone to the Baths of St. Julian, and on enquiring for him, was referred for information to Lady Mountcashel, a lady whose retirement from the world was not unprofitable, for perhaps it was devoted to one of the best works on the Education of Children which we possess. She was one of the few persons with whom the Shelleys were intimate. She had been in early life the friend of Mary Wollstonecraft, and this was the tie between them. An interesting and amiable person was Mrs. Mason, as she called herself, and from her I gained the desired intelligence, and the next day Shelley came to my hotel, the Trè Donzelle.

It was nearly seven years since we had parted; but I should immediately have recognised him in a crowd. His figure was emaciated, and somewhat bent; owing to near-sightedness, and his being forced to lean over his books, with his eyes almost touching them; his hair, still profuse, and curling naturally, was partially interspersed

* "I Pisan veder Lucca non ponno."—DANTE.

¹ It is with the next paragraph as originally issued in the year that the second volume of the Life 1847 opens.

with grey, as he says in *Alastor* "sere by the Autumn of strange suffering"; but his appearance was youthful, and his countenance, whether grave or animated, strikingly intellectual. There was also a freshness and purity in his complexion that he never lost. I accompanied him to the baths, then, owing to the lateness of the season, (it was November,) quite deserted,—for they are completely a summer resort; and there I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mrs. Shelley, and saw Percy, then a child of about a year old. Their house was immediately on the banks of the Serchio, and on the very day of my arrival, that little, rapid river, or rather the canal that branches from it, overflowed its banks; no uncommon circumstance. It ran into the square, and formed a flood that threatened to cut off the communication with the main road to Pisa. Mrs. Shelley speaks of the event. Well do I remember the scene, which I stood with Shelley at the window to admire. The Contadine bore torches, and the groups of cattle, and the shouts of the drivers, the picturesque dresses of their wives, half immersed in the water, and carrying their children, and the dark mountains in the background, standing out in bold relief, formed a singular spectacle, well worthy of a painter's study. Shelley wished me to sketch it, but it was far beyond my powers of delineation,—besides that I had no colours. The next morning, the inundation having still continued to increase, the first floor was completely under water, and barring all other egress, we were obliged to get a boat from the upper windows, and thence drove to Pisa, where Shelley had already taken an apartment—a Terreno in the Casa, opposite to the Marble Palace, with the enigmatical inscription, "Alla Giornata," an inscription that has puzzled much the

antiquary to explain, and with which title a Novel has been written, which I have never seen. Perhaps there is no mystery in "Alla Giornata," which means, erected by day-work, instead of contract, the usual mode of building in Italy. But Shelley was inclined to think that there was some deep and mystical meaning in the words, and was but little satisfied with this prosaic interpretation, and deemed it was a tribute to the East, where the proprietor had past his best days, and made his colossal fortune. I have mentioned this magnificent palace, in order to identify the house where Shelley lived, the name of which has escaped me.¹

We here fixed ourselves for the winter, if such an expression be applicable to the divine climate of that gifted city, "where autumn merges into spring, after but a few days of bleaker weather."

I was suffering from the effects of my abode in the East, and placed myself under the hands of the celebrated Vaccà, of whom Shelley and Lord Byron both speak with deserved praise.

During a long and severe attack of illness, aggravated by the fatigues of my journey from Geneva, Shelley tended me like a brother. He applied my leeches, administered my medicines, and during six weeks that I was confined to my room, was assiduous and unintermitting in his affectionate care of me,—care I shall never forget; most ungrateful should I indeed be, were it not indelibly stamped on my memory.

During this imprisonment, it was, that I first had an

¹ Mrs. Julian Marshall says (I. 309-10) that the Shelleys "took a top flat in the 'Tre Palazzi di Chiesa,' on the Lung' Arno," and that the Williamses transferred themselves

from Pugnano to a lower flat in the "Tre Palazzi"; opposite which building the Shelleys secured for Byron the Casa Lanfranchi, "the finest palace in the Lung' Arno."

opportunity of reading his works, with many of which I was unacquainted. The delight they afforded me often disarmed pain. I loved to trace in them, from our crude attempts at rhyme, his earliest thoughts, associated as they were with the recollections of our boyhood; to follow the development of his genius. Nor was it only from his printed poems that I learned to estimate his surpassing talents, he lent me a MS. volume, containing his *Ode to Liberty*, *The Sensitive Plant*, the exquisite *Arethusa and Peneus*, and many other of his lyrics, which I devoured, and enthusiastically admired. He was surprised at my enthusiasm, and said to me,—“I am disgusted with writing, and were it not for an irresistible impulse, that predominates my better reason, should discontinue so doing”; words not unresembling the pathetic lamentation of Tasso, that “oppressed by the burthen of his calamities, he had lost every prospect of reputation and of honor.” And who can wonder or—considering the poignancy of his sufferings—be surprised that the neglect of the world—then seeing his works one after the other fall dead from the Press—others who did not possess a tythe of his genius belauded by a hireling press and caressed by the public—should lacerate his heart and make him at times doubt that the light which he followed was not a steady flame, but an *Ignis fatuus* of the Imagination in which was no vividness or durability?—And then to look back on the past to see all his dearest hopes blighted, his fond aspirations after immortality turned into a mockery—to see his life become aimless—profitless!—How can we wonder at his Despondency? And yet with all his despondency at the neglect of the world—his distraction of mind at the attacks of his implacable enemies, one may conceive the intense enjoyment he must have

experienced at creations such as the *Prometheus Unbound*, in the outpouring of his *Ode to Liberty*, or the Improvisation (for such it was) of the fanciful and imaginative *Witch of Atlas*.—Self-absorbed, luxuriating in a world of his own, he annihilated matter and time—Hours fled like moments fledged with ever fresh delights—Even his sorrows (and who suffered more?) were but the drops in the Crucible—the sad mesh of humanity—and his poetical alchymy drew from them one of infinite purity and beauty.—He says indeed the pleasure of sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself. Such might he have occasionally found it—but there were times when his sorrow must have been almost more than humanity could bear, and I remember when speaking to him one day of Chatterton, his saying that four of his friends had committed suicide. Three are well known but who the other was I am ignorant.¹ He said that few people had not been tempted during some period of their lives to destroy themselves, and I have reason to think that like Keats he had contemplated such a termination to his ills,—even if he had not left the attempted work incomplete. On such occasions, he fell into a mood, most distressing to witness, was affected with a prostration of spirits that bent him to the earth, a melancholy too sacred to notice, and which it would have been a vain attempt to dissipate.

At other times perhaps, however, his features, that bore the impress of suffering, might have been false interpreters of the state of his mind, and his spirit might be

¹ Medwin catalogued the three in the margin of the revised copy, thus—

Mary Wolstencroft—
Polidori—
Mrs. Shelley—

meaning by the first of the entries Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter Fanny and by the last entry Shelley's first wife, Harriett, drowned in the Serpentine.

lost in reverie, of which state it has been well said, that those subject to it, are dissolved into the surrounding atmosphere, or feel as if the surrounding atmosphere were dissolved into their being. Something of this, I have more than once remarked in Shelley, as we stood watching from my open window in the upper part of the house, the sunsets of Pisa, which are gorgeous beyond any I have ever witnessed; when the waters, the sky, and the marble palaces that line the magnificent crescent of the Lung' Arno, were glowing with crimson—the river a flood of molten gold,—and I seem now to follow its course towards the *Ponte al Mare*, till the eye rested on the *Torre del Fame*, that frowned in dark rilievo on the horizon. On such occasions, after one of these reveries, he would forget himself, lost in admiration, and exclaim, —“What a glorious world! There is, after all, something worth living for. This makes me retract the wish that I had never been born.”

During our walks we frequently visited the Campo Santo, which with the Battisteria and the Hanging Tower constitute perhaps one of the most picturesque groups in the world.—They are the more striking from their Solitude and standing as they do in an enclosure of the finest turf, ever verdant and starred with the flowers which never set in Italy, the daisies.¹ He took me also to the Foundling Hospital where a hole in the wall admits at all hours the new born Babes, whom their Mothers commit to the Asylum—an admirable institution—and I remember his saying “that it was a disgrace to our boasted civilization that no similar one should exist in

¹ Why not have given Shelley's own words, in *The Question*?—

Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth,

The constellated flower that never sets—

the theft from which is too obvious.

London or our large Cities which he said would prevent a crime here unknown and there too common, Infanticide, originating in a sense of shame, and the inadequacy of means to support the fatherless offspring of prostitution."

Other feelings, besides those of disappointment, had tended at this time to wound his sensitive spirit. Had it been the Quarterly Reviewer's object, as it undoubtedly was, to place Shelley under a ban—to drive him from the pale of society, he could not have adopted a course more suited to his diabolical purpose. From the time of the appearance of this article, if his friends did not forsake altogether, they, with few exceptions, fell off from him; and with a lacerated heart, only a few months after the appearance of the number, he writes:—"I am regarded by all who know, or hear of me, except I think on the whole *five* individuals, as a rare prodigy of crime and pollution, whose look even might infect. This *five* is a large computation, and I don't think I could name more than *three*." Who these exceptions were, he does not mention.

To show what the feeling of the English abroad was against him, in consequence of this vile attack, I will here repeat an anecdote, which I have already given to the world,¹ and which must have highly gratified the respectable contributor to the *Quarterly*. But a few weeks had elapsed, when a singular and dastardly outrage had been committed on Shelley. He was at the Post-office, asking for his letters, addressed, as is usual in Italy, *Poste-restante*, when a stranger in a military cloak, on hearing him pronounce his name, said, "What, are you that d——d atheist, Shelley?" and without more

¹ The reference is to the Memoir communicated to *The Athenæum* in 1832 and reprinted in *The Shelley Papers* (1833, pp. 58-9).

preamble, being a tall, powerful man, struck him such a blow that it felled him to the ground, and stunned him. On coming to himself, Shelley found the ruffian had disappeared.

Raving with the insult, he immediately sought his friend, Mr. Tighe, the son of the renowned Psyche Tighe,¹ who lost no time in taking measures to obtain satisfaction. Mr. Tighe was some time in discovering where the cowardly aggressor had put up; but at length tracked him to the Trè Donzelle. There were but few travellers

¹ This reckless statement of the most reckless of biographers misled both my friend Rossetti and myself in the seventies. I do not now think there is the slightest ground for accepting it; nor, indeed, can I find record of any issue left by Mrs. Henry Tighe, although one pathetic poem points to the birth and death of an infant. Mary Blachford was first cousin to three brothers Tighe, — William, Henry, M.P., and John Edward. They were sons of another William Tighe, M.P., and grandsons of yet another. Their uncle, Edward Tighe, M.P., had one son, George William; and he it was who, as correctly stated by Mrs. Angeli (*Shelley and his Friends in Italy*, 1911, p. 89), figured in Pisa as Mr. Mason (or more familiarly "Tatty") and lived with Lady Mountcashel, who, in her turn, being mother of his two daughters, was respectfully accepted as Mrs. Mason. At that time "Mr. and Mrs. Mason" could do no more than be faithful to each other in their "free union," — Stephen, second Earl Mountcashel, being still alive; but he died in 1822, and after that "Mr. and Mrs. Mason" very properly got married. The facts about the Tighe family, as baldly set out in Burke's Landed Gentry of Ireland, lead clearly to the conclusion that "Tatty's"

cousin Henry married their cousin Mary Blachford; and that it was her cousin William Tighe of Woodstock, M.P., who, when his brother Henry failed to make cousin Mary happy, gave the stricken poetess the privilege of dying at his seat. He it was, I believe, who, being himself more or less a cultivator of the Muses, edited the works of his beautiful sister-in-law and cousin after her death in 1810. His quarto volume of 1811 reappeared in a succession of octavo editions. Keats was more or less influenced by *Psyche or the Legend of Love*, which forms the mass of Mrs. Tighe's poetic output, now long forgotten save by a few students and collectors. Keats very soon outgrew it; but it seems that, before he had done so, he copied from her works a pathetic sonnet beginning

Brother below'd, if health shall
smile again

Upon this wasted form and
fever'd cheek . . .

George Keats is supposed to have found this sonnet in John's writing; for he attributed it to his brother, and thus misled an editor who shall be nameless, — especially as he has long ago recanted and withdrawn the sonnet from its false position among Keats's works, on finding it by chance among Mrs. Tighe's.

then in the city, and the description of the man tallied exactly with that of an officer in the Portuguese service, whose name I have now forgotten, tho' I saw Letters to his address lying in the Post-office at Genoa—it being the habit to place all English Letters addressed *Poste-restante* in the hands of any one enquiring for his. He had, however, started without delay for Genoa, whither Mr. Tighe and Shelley followed, but without being able to overtake him, or learn his route from that city.

This anecdote may suggest to the reader the fanaticism which nearly proved fatal to Spinoza, who has been branded everywhere but in Germany as an Atheist and Epicurean, but whom Novalis calls a god-intoxicated man, and whose epicureanism is best disproved by his spending only twopence halfpenny a day on his food.

One evening as Spinoza was coming out of the theatre, where he had been relaxing his overtaxed mind, he was startled by the fierce expression of a dark face thrust eagerly before his. The glare of blood-thirsty fanaticism arrested him; a knife gleamed in the air, and he had barely time to parry the blow. It fell upon his chest, but fortunately deadened in its force, only tore his coat. The assassin escaped—Spinoza walked home thoughtful.

The author of the *Biography of Philosophy*, one of the most acute and candid works I ever met with, compares Shelley and Spinoza together, and does ample justice to their characters. Speaking of Spinoza's ostracism, he says,—

“Like the young and energetic Shelley, who afterwards imitated him, he found himself an outcast in the busy world, with no other guides through its perplexing labyrinths than sincerity and self-dependence. Two or three new friends soon presented themselves,

men who warred against their religion, as he had warred against his own; and a bond of sympathy was forged out of the common injustice. Here again we trace a resemblance to Shelley, who, discountenanced by his relations, sought among a few sceptical friends, to supply the affection he was thus deprived of. Like Spinoza, he too had only sisters with whom he had been brought up. No doubt, in both cases, the consciousness of sincerity, and the pride of martyrdom, were great shields in the combat with society. They are always so, and it is well they are so, or the battle would never be fought; but they never entirely replace the affections. Shut from our family, we may seek a brotherhood of apostacy, but the new and precarious intellectual sympathies are no compensations for the loss of the emotive sympathies, with all their links of association and all their memories of childhood. Spinoza must have felt this, and as Shelley in a rash marriage endeavoured to fill up the void of his yearning heart, so Spinoza must, we think, swayed by the same feeling, have sought the daughter of his friend and master, Vanden Ende, as his wife."¹

This anecdote (to return to it) will show what animosity the malice of Shelley's enemies had roused against him in the hearts of his compatriots; but the time is happily past, when Quarterlies can deal forth damnation, and point out as a mad dog, to be knocked on the head, every one who does not subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles.

During this winter, he translated to me the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, reading it as fluently as if written in French or Italian; and if there be any merit in my own version of that wonderful drama, which appeared together

¹ A *Biographical History of Philosophy* by G. H. Lewes is so precisely followed save in the last five lines, the spelling of Spinoza's name, and the substitution of *shields* for *sustainments* in line 12, that one almost suspects Medwin of having cut the bulk of the passage out of the book for "copy," and then added a bit in manuscript. The extract is from the third of the little volumes (pp. 116-17) constituting the work in its original fascinating form. In later years Lewes revised and enlarged it, and in the editions of 1867 and

later entitled it, more ambitiously, *The History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte*. One does not usually concern oneself about Medwin having an excuse for any kind of inaccuracy. But this time he has the shadow of an excuse. Lewes's preface opens with the words—"To write the Biography of Philosophy while writing the Biographies of Philosophers is the aim of the following work." Thus he actually supplied his fellow biographer with the words of the title adopted by the latter's gadding fancy.

with the remaining Plays in *Fraser*,¹ it is much due to the recollection of his words, which often flowed on line after line in blank verse, into which very harmonious prose resolves itself naturally. His friends, the Gisbornes, had, two summers before, taught him also Spanish, which I had studied in India from a Spanish *Gil Blas*, pretended to be the original—Le Sage's the copy; and we luxuriated in what Shelley calls "the golden and starry Autos,"² or Mysteries,—except the Greek Choruses, perhaps among the most difficult poems to comprehend—and very rare; so much so, that they are scarcely to be obtained in Spain, though found by Shelley accidentally in an old book-stall at Leghorn. It was the quarto Edition, which formed one of the gems in Tieck's Catalogue, an edition of great rarity and value. It was not a perfect work but consisting of several odd Volumes, which it may be remarked was the case with Tieck's. It may be well said, that every new language is a new sense; Shelley profited much by his mastery of Calderon, and has left some scenes of *Cyprian* that give the original in all its spirit. But we also read a tragedy of Calderon's, which, though it cannot compete with Shakspeare's

¹ Medwin's translations from Æschylus appeared in six numbers of *Fraser's Magazine* at about the rate of one per year,—1832 to 1838. *The Choëphori, The Persians, The Seven before Thebes, The Eumenides, Prometheus Bound, and Agamemnon.* Of *The Suppliants* no trace of a rendering by him has come to my knowledge. I believe the play was much neglected in those days, on account of its corruptions. Medwin may have regarded it as Mr. Birrell does, in the light of a fragment. (See *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, 2 vol., 1897—i. 493.) Curiously enough, the *Prometheus* and *Agamemnon* translations when they appeared in

Fraser's Magazine in 1837 and 1838, had been published by Pickering as separate octavo pamphlets in 1832.

² The reference may be taken to be to that passage in Shelley's letter to John Gisborne (November 1820) in which he says that he is "bathing himself in the light and odour of the flowery and starry autos,"—adding that he has "read them all more than once." See *Prose Works*, vol. iv, p. 193. The statement lends likelihood to the allegation that Shelley's copy was merely of some odd volumes. To read *all* Calderon's autos more than once would have been a big undertaking.

Henry the VIII., contains more poetry—the *Cisma D'Ingalaterra*. Shelley was much struck with the characteristic Fool, who plays a part in it, and deals in fables, but more so with the octave stanzas (a strange metre in a drama, to choose,) spoken by Carlos, Enamorado di Anna Bolena, whom he had met at Paris, during her father's embassy. So much did Shelley admire these stanzas, that he copied them out into one of his letters to Mrs. Gisborne; of the two last I append a translation, marking in Italics the lines corrected by Shelley:—

Hast thou not seen, officious with delight,
 Move through the illumined air about the flower,
 The Bee, that fears to drink its purple light,
 Lest danger lurk within that Rose's bower?
 Hast thou not marked the moth's enamoured flight,
 About the Taper's flame at evening hour,
Till kindle in that monumental fire
His sunflower wings their own funereal pyre?
 My heart its wishes trembling to unfold,
 Thus round the Rose and Taper hovering came,
And Passion's slave, Distrust, in ashes cold,
Smothered awhile, but could not quench the flame,
 Till Love, that grows by disappointment bold,
 And Opportunity, had conquered Shame,
 And like the Bee and Moth, in act to close,
I burnt my wings, and settled on the Rose.

I had also the advantage of reading Dante with him; he lamented that no adequate translation existed of the *Divina Commedia*, and though he thought highly of Cary's work, with which he said he had for the first time studied the original, praising the fidelity of the version—it by no means satisfied him. What he meant by an adequate translation, was, one in terza rima; for in Shelley's own words, he held it an essential justice to an author, to render him in the same form. I asked him if he had

never attempted this, and looking among his papers, he shewed, and gave me to copy, the following fragment from the *Purgatorio*, which leaves on the mind an inextinguishable regret, that he did not employ himself in rendering other of the finest passages. In no language has inspiration gone beyond this picture of exquisite beauty, which undoubtedly suggested to Tennyson his *Dream of Fair Women*.

And earnest to explore within—around
That divine wood, whose thick green living woof
Tempered the young day to the sight, I wound

Up a green slope, beneath the starry roof,
With slow—slow steps—leaving the mountain's steep,
And sought those leafy labyrinths, motion-proof

Against the air, that in that stillness, deep
And solemn, struck upon my forehead bare,
Like a sweet breathing of a child in sleep*.

†Already had I lost myself so far,
Amid that tangled wilderness, that I
Perceived not where I entered—but no fear

Of wandering from my way disturbed, when nigh,
A little stream appeared; the grass that grew
Thick on its banks, impeded suddenly

My going on. Water of purest dew
On earth, would appear turbid and impure,
Compared with this—whose unconcealing hue,

Dark—dark—yet clear, moved under the obscure
Of the close boughs, whose interwoven looms
No ray of moon or sunshine would endure.

My feet were motionless, but mid the glooms
Darted my charmed eyes, contemplating
The mighty multitude of fresh May-blooms

* Canto 28, *Purgatorio*.—"Vago di cercar," down to "Soave vento."

† Gia m'avean trasportato i lenti passi.

That starred that night; when even as a thing
That suddenly for blank astonishment
Charms every sense, and makes all thought take wing,

Appeared a solitary maid—she went
Singing, and gathering flower after flower,
With which her way was painted and besprent.

Bright lady! who if looks had ever power
To bear true witness of the heart within,
Dost bask under the beams of love, come lower

Unto this bank—prithce O! let me win
This much of thee—O come! that I may hear
Thy song: like Proserpine, in Enna's glen,

Thou seemest to my fancy,—singing here,
And gathering flowers, as that fair maiden, when
She lost the spring, and Ceres her more dear.

Another of the canons of Shelley, was, that translations are intended for those who do not understand the originals, and that they should be purely English. I have often read with delight his *Εὐς ἀλα* of Theocritus, beginning,—

When winds that move not the calm surface, &c.

His *Cyclops* of Euripides and Homer's *Hymn to Mercury* are specimens of what his powers as a translator were and how critically he was versed in Greek and caught the true Spirit of his authors. It is something to say that the Version of the Comic Drama may challenge comparison with that of Professor Wilson which appeared many years afterwards in the pages of *Blackwood's Magazine*.

Lord Byron has left a translation of the Rimini story from the *Inferno*, which affords as poor an idea of the passage in Dante, as an easel copy does of an old fresco of Giotto's. It is a hard, cold, rough, cast-iron impress, dry and bald, and in many parts unfaithfully rendered; and at Shelley's request, and with his assistance, I at-

tempted to give the Ugolino, which is valuable to the admirers of Shelley, on account of his numerous corrections, which almost indeed make it his own.

Now had the loophole of that dungeon, still
Which bears the name of Famine's Tower from me,
And where 'tis fit that many another will

Be doomed to linger in captivity,
Shown through its narrow opening in my cell,
Moon after moon slow waning, when a sleep,

That of the future burst the veil, in dream
Visited me—it was a slumber deep
And evil—for I saw, or I did seem

To see, *that* tyrant Lord his revels keep,
The leader of the cruel hunt to them,
Chasing the wolf and wolf-cubs up the steep

Ascent, that from *the Pisan is the screen*
Of *Lucca*; with him Gualandi came,
Sismondi, and Lanfranchi, *bloodhounds lean,*

Trained to the sport and eager for the game,
Wide ranging in his front; but soon were seen,
Though by so short a course, with *spirits tame,*

The father and *his whelps* to flag at once,
And then the sharp fangs gored their bosoms deep.
Ere morn I roused myself, and heard my sons,

For they were with me, moaning in their sleep,
And begging bread. Ah for those darling ones!
Right cruel art thou, if thou dost not weep,

In thinking of my soul's sad augury;
And if thou weepest not now, weep never more!
They were already waked, as wont drew nigh

The allotted hour for food, and in that hour
Each drew a presage from his dream. When I
Heard locked beneath me, of that horrible tower

The outlet, then into their eyes alone
I looked to read myself, without a sign
Or word. I wept not—turned within to stone.

They wept aloud, and little Anselm mine,
Said,—'twas my youngest, dearest little one,—
"What ails thee, father! why look so at thine?"

In all that day, and all the following night,
I wept not, nor replied; but when to shine
Upon the world, not us, came forth the light

Of the new sun, and thwart my prison thrown,
Gleamed thro' its narrow chink—a doleful sight,—
Three faces, each the reflex of my own,

Were imaged by its faint and ghastly ray;
Then I, of either hand unto the bone,
Gnawed, in my agony; and thinking they

'Twas done from hunger pangs in their excess,
All of a sudden raise themselves, and say,
"Father! our woes so great, were not the less"¹

Would you but eat of us,—'twas *you who clad*
Our bodies in these weeds of wretchedness,
Despoil them." Not to make their hearts more sad,

I *hushed* myself. That day is at its close,—
Another—still we were all mute. Oh had
The obdurate earth opened to end our woes!

The fourth day dawned, and when the new sun shone,
Outstretched himself before me as it rose,
My Gaddo, saying, "Help, father! hast thou none
For thine own child—is there no help from thee?"
He died—there at my feet—and one by one,
I saw them fall, plainly as you see me.

Between the fifth and sixth day, ere 'twas dawn,
I found *myself blind-groping o'er the three.*
Three days I called them after they were gone.

Famine, of grief can get the mastery.

This translation I shewed afterwards to Byron, and
remember his saying, that he interpreted the last words,

¹ As this part of the version is not
attributed to Shelley, its inaccuracy
does not much matter; but it seems
probable that *not* was a misprint for

yet. Rossetti amended the line ac-
cordingly in his edition of Shelley;
and I adopted the reading in mine
in 1877.

"Piu che dolor potè il digiunó" to mean (an interpretation in which Shelley by no means agreed with him) that Ugolino actually did feed on his children after their deaths, and which Lord Byron thought was clearly borne out by the nature of the retribution of his tormentor, as well as the offer of the children to make themselves a sacrifice for their father. "The story," observed Shelley, "is horrible enough without such a comment,"—and he added, "that Byron had deeply studied this death of Ugolino, and perhaps but for it, would never have written *The Prisoner of Chillon*."

Shelley was well conscious of his talent for Translation and told me that disheartened as he was with the success of his Original composition, he thought of dedicating his time to throwing the grey veil of his own words over the perfect and glowing forms of other writers, and it is not impossible that he might have had it in his mind to translate the *Divina Commedia*.

Speaking of Dante, among Shelley's acquaintances at Pisa, was a Mr. Taaffe, of whom Byron makes mention in his letters, and whom Shelley used to call *Taφος*, as he did Leigh Hunt "Leontius," &c.

Mr. Taaffe had the monomania that he could translate the *Divina Commedia*, and we were much amused by his version, which he brought from time to time, of some of the cantos of the *Inferno*, rendered in octosyllabics; one of the strangest metres to adopt for a serious drama, and a metre that did not admit even of fidelity, for though our own language is extremely monosyllabic, to squeeze three hexameter terza rimas into short ones, was an utter impossibility and despair. Mr. Taaffe told Shelley that a brother of his in the Austrian service was occupied in a similar pursuit, and Shelley remarked that it was hard

upon poor Dante, that his spirit, after a lapse of six centuries, could not be allowed to remain at rest, but must be disquieted by two Milesians.

Let not Mr. Taaffe take ill these remarks—he was an amiable and clever man, and his commentary on Dante appeared to me excellent,—as well as to Byron, who recommended Murray to publish and who I believe did publish it.

I found one of the great remedies for my bodily sufferings this winter, in Shelley's reading. No one ever gave such emphasis to poetry. His voice, it is true, was a cracked soprano, but in the variety of its tones, and the intensity of feeling which he displayed in the finest passages, produced an effect almost electric. He had just completed *The Witch of Atlas*, which in lyrical harmony and fancy, must be considered as a masterpiece. It may be called, if you will, an *ignis fatuus* of the imagination, and was objected to by Mrs. Shelley as such,—a censure that hurt Shelley, and called forth his lines to her, in which he compares it with *Peter Bell*, which according to Wordsworth, cost him nineteen years in composing and retouching—Shelley's *Witch of Atlas*, not so many hours. How well does he, in these exculpatory verses, characterise the difference between her and Ruth, or Lucy, the first “in a light vest of flowing metre,” and Peter, “proud as a dandy with his stays hanging on his wiry limbs, a dress,

Like King Lear's looped and windowed raggedness,”

Shelley used to chuckle, with his peculiar hysterical cachination, over this Nursery Tale of Wordsworth's, and to repeat the stanza which forms the motto of his own *Peter Bell*, with tears running down his laughing eyes, as he gave utterance to,—

This is Hell, and in this smother,
 All are damnable and damned,
 Each one damning, damns the other,
 They are damned by one another,
 By no other are they damned.¹

No one was more sensible to the merits of Wordsworth than himself, but he no longer, as proved by his sonnet, looked upon him as his ideal. He was still an enthusiastic admirer of his early productions, and particularly of his inimitable lines in blank verse to his sister, which satiate with excess of sweetness; but these, he said, were written in the golden time of his genius, and he held with Byron, as Nursery Rhymes, the Idiot Boy, and many others. *The Excursion* I never heard him mention; and he thought that Wordsworth had left no perfect specimen of an Ode,—that he always broke down when he attempted one. Collins he thought a cold, artificial writer, Gray I never heard him mention; and of all the Odes in our language, he most preferred Coleridge's on the French Revolution, beginning, "Ye Clouds," which he used to thunder out with marvellous energy, as well as *The Ancient Mariner*. But to return to *The Witch of Atlas*. As to the objection of its not having human interest, one might as well make the same to Shakspeare's Queen Mab. But I even deny that such is the case; like its prototype, he carries the spirit of dream through the chambers of the

¹ The real Wordsworthian motto stanza, peculiar to the first and second editions of *Peter Bell, a Tale in Verse* (1819), is—

Is it a party in a parlour?
 Cramm'd just as they on earth
 were cramm'd—
 Some sipping punch, some sip-
 ping tea,

But, as you by their faces see,
 All silent, and all damn'd!

The lines quoted by Medwin are, of course, Shelley's own (*Peter Bell the Third*, Part III, *Hell*, stanza xv) with the initial *And* omitted from line 1.

great—to the perfumed couch of beauty, the paradise of love ; nor this alone,—

But she would write strange dreams upon the brain
Of those who were less beautiful,—

to soldiers, and priests, and kings ; interweaving in the texture of the poem, his own philosophy, and drawing many a charming moral from the witch's pranks among the cities of mortal men, and sprites and gods. What a subject for Retsch to have illustrated ! a second *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Mrs. Shelley had at this time been writing some little Dramas on classical subjects, one of which was the Rape of Proserpine, a very graceful composition which she has never published. Shelley contributed to this the exquisite fable of Arethusa and the Invocation to Ceres.—Among the Nymphs gathering flowers on Enna were two whom she called Ino and Uno, names which I remember in the Dialogue were irresistibly ludicrous. She also wrote one on Midas—into which were introduced by Shelley—in the Contest between Pan and Apollo, the Sublime Effusion of the latter, and Pan's characterised Ode. She also had composed a Tale probably suggested by Alfieri's *Myrrha*—the only Play of his which strange to say, has possession of the Stage—I remember turned on the incestuous love of a daughter for a father. Her taste was at this time not so refined as at present. It was however delicately treated—a disgusting subject—and I am not surprised that it should never have made its appearance—Mrs. Shelley had it seems from a letter of Shelley's translated some scenes of Alfieri's *Myrrha*, and probably worked out the subject in prose—in accordance with Shelley's opinion that Incest is a very poetical circumstance. In this I cannot agree with him.—She also this winter read with Shelley—for she

is a tolerable Latin Scholar—Spinoza—whose arguments she then thought irrefutable—*Tempora Mutantur*.

I must speak of other and higher strains.

Spain had given the signal to Italy—Piedmont asserted her freedom—Genoa threw off the yoke—Sardinia and the little state of Massa Carrara, in imitation of the Swiss Cantons, formed itself into a republic—Naples followed in extorting a constitution. These events, in which Shelley took a breathless interest, aroused all those sympathies which had already been displayed in the lines on “The Manchester Massacre,” and *The Masque of Anarchy*. His odes to Liberty, and Naples, have nothing in our language that can compete with them. They have the merit of being—what few or none of our modern odes (miscalled) are—odes constructed on the models left us by Pindar and Horace, and worthy of the best times of Greece and Rome; and have only one fault, that, alas! they were not prophetic,—that his aspirations were unfulfilled, that bloodshed and anarchy followed in the train of the Spanish revolution, and that that of Naples was soon put down by Austrian bayonets. A vain attempt to snap the chain only renders it more irrefragable. Shelley felt deeply the resubjugation of Naples, and used to inveigh against Moore’s lines, beginning,—

Yes, down to the dust with them, slaves as they are!

suggested by a failure which HE deemed ignominious; and Shelley said that they were written in a spirit unworthy of himself and an Irishman, and whether merited or not, were cruel and ungenerous.

In August, 1820, he had also written his Mock Play, or Comic Drama of *Ædipus (Swellfoot)*, and a copy of which, given me by Shelley, I had in my possession more

than twenty years before it was published by Mrs. Shelley.¹ He told me that on the first day of its being exposed for sale in the City, the then Lord Mayor of London, who was a friend of the gentleman who corrected the proof sheets, advised him to withdraw it. There was nothing in it to call for the animadversion of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, nor do I think that a Crown prosecution would have been its fate, for it was perfectly harmless as regards the public, who could not possibly understand it. *Œdipus* (George the Fourth), *Iona Taurina* (Queen Caroline), *Laoctonos* (Wellington), *Purganax* (Castlereagh), *Dacrus* [*sic* for *Dacry*]*—*from his lachrymatory propensities (Lord Eldon), form the *dramatis personæ*. The derivation of *John Bull* is very witty. The *Minotaur* speaks.

I am the old traditional man Bull,
And from my ancestors have been called *Ionian*;
I am called *Ion*, which by interpretation
Is *John*,—in plain *Theban*, that is to say,
I am *John Bull*.

The *Green Bag* is most happily hit off, and the *Chorusses* are very fine, particularly that of the *Gad-fly*. It is indeed a satirical drama, quite in the spirit of *Aristophanes*.

Mrs. Shelley gives the following account of the origin of the idea, which is curious.

“We were at the baths of *St. Julian*, and a friend came to visit us, when a fair was held in the square beneath our windows. Shelley read to us his *Ode to Liberty*, and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs, brought for sale. He compared it to the chorus of frogs in the *Batrachæ*, and it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he

¹ Shelley cannot have done this till the winter of 1820–21. Mrs. Shelley revived the poem in her second collected edition of 1839 (November). This looks like short measure for even nineteen years.

imagined a political drama on the circumstance of the day, the forthcoming trial of Queen Caroline."

She adds, "that like everything he wrote, it breathes that deep sympathy for the sorrows of humanity, and indignation against its oppressors, which make it worthy of his name."

Shelley's library was a very limited one. He used to say that a good library consisted not of many books, but a few chosen ones; and asking him what he considered such, he said, "I'll give you my list—catalogue it can't be called:—The Greek Plays, Plato, Lord Bacon's Works, Shakspeare, The Old Dramatists, Milton, Göthe and Schiller, Dante, Petrarch and Boccacio, and Machiavelli and Guicciardini,—not forgetting Calderon; and last, yet first, the Bible." I do not mean that this was all his collection. He had read few English works of the day—scarcely a novel except Walter Scott's, for whose genius he had a sovereign respect, and *Anastasius*, by which he thought Lord Byron profited in his *Don Juan*; and the *Promessi Sposi*. He used to say that he carefully avoided reading inferior books, in prose or bad poetry, for fear of unconsciously spoiling his style, reminding me of a friend of mine who would not allow his children from a similar apprehension of their acquiring a false taste looking at bad pictures or engravings; and when travelling used to turn such with their faces to the walls. Shelley in speaking of Hope and Manzoni, said, "that one good novel was enough for any man to write, and thought both judicious in not risking their fame by a second attempt." I read with him the greater part of the *Betrothed Lovers*. He admired their being made the hero and heroine; said it was an original conception, finely worked out, to make them peasants; that Don Aboddio was a piece of life-like

drawing, and did not wonder that an Italian, so different is the spirit of our language from his own, should call Shakspeare a barbarian. He pointed out to me the scene in the *Innominato's* Castle, when he is first attacked with the plague—and looked upon the description of that pestilence at Milan, as far superior to those in De Foe or Thucydides.

One of the plays we read this winter was Schiller's *Maid of Orleans*; he thought it bold to have treated the Christian religion as a mythology in that drama, and said that a hundred years hence it would be more admired than now. He deemed it still bolder, making Mary Queen of Scots receive the Sacrament on the stage. We read also Cervantes's *Little Novels* in two volumes, which he deemed very inferior and slight, and totally unworthy of the great genius.

Among English plays he was a great admirer of *The Duchess of Malfy*, and thought the dungeon scene, where she takes her executioners for allegorical personages, of Torture and Murder, or some such grim personifications, as equal to anything in Shakspeare, indeed he was continually reading the Old Dramatists—Middleton, and Webster. Ford and Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher, were the mines from which he drew the pure and vigorous style that so highly distinguishes *The Cenci*. Had he been encouraged by the popularity of that Tragedy there is little question but that he would have dedicated his talents to the Stage, but it was clear from his after efforts of which I shall have to speak that the weight of the world weighed on him like a leaden mantle, made him diffident of himself, and often prevented the free exercise of his dramatic powers. Lord Byron pretends that his Tragedies were not intended for the Stage—but who can

believe him—and his disappointment at the failure of *Marino Faliero*, and attributing that failure to the acting rather than the demerits of the work, proves that he was not sincere in his assertion.

I have already spoken of Shelley's opinion of some of his contemporaries, it may not be uninteresting to know what he thought of the merits of others of them. He had, as I have said, been in early life a great admirer of Southey, and took him as his metrical model, but he told me that when his taste became more fastidious, he looked upon him in the light of an improvisatore. "What do you mean by that, Shelley?" I asked. "I mean," he replied, "that he has fancy, imagination, taste,—that he is facile and flowing in his versification,—most musical, if you will,—but he is too smooth and level, he seldom or ever rises with his subject; he will stand criticism as far as words go, but no further; he moves, but does not touch the heart. One reads him with delight once, but never takes him up a second time; besides, his subjects possess no interest that bears upon the times." Of Rogers and Campbell, whom he called the bepetted and spoiled children of fortune, I shall have something to say in another place. Moore's *Irish Melodies* were great favourites with him, especially *The Irish Peasant to his Mistress*, meaning England and Ireland; of Byron's *Childe Harold* he has recorded, in a letter to Mr. P[eacock], his sentiments.—"The spirit in which it is written, is the most wicked and mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obdurate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself;" and adds, "I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things arises," and concludes with, "He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself; and contemplating in the distorted mirror

of his own thoughts, the nature and duty of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair?" These remarks apply to the tenor of the poem,—its tendency, rather than to the poem itself; that he thought Byron a great poet, is proved by a sonnet, of which I forget two of the lines, but which Byron never saw. —

If I esteemed thee less, Envy would kill
Pleasure, and leave to Wonder and Despair
The ministration of the thoughts that fill
My soul, which even as a worm may share
A portion of the Unapproachable,
Marks thy creations rise as fast and fair
As perfect worlds at the Creator's will;
But not the blessings of thy happier lot,
Nor thy well-won prosperity and fame,

Move one regret for his unhonoured name,
Who dares these words—the worm beneath the sod
May lift itself in homage of the God.¹

This Sonnet was written one day after reading *The Corsair* from the perusal of which he rose with strong expressions of its beauty and force—and I remember his saying that it was the finest specimen of Couplets in our language:—that no one wielded that most difficult of metres with so much of variety and power as Byron—Shelley frequently spoke of Leigh Hunt, one of three persons who he says did not look upon him as a monster of iniquity. Hunt was one of the Joint Editors of *The Examiner*—had found occasion (a singular exception) to do justice to his Talents—Hunt had also been imprisoned for a personal libel on George the 4th.—He was a poor Author with a large family and a Sick Wife and these were all claims on Shelley's heart and purse.—I remember his

¹ For full information about the text of the sonnet in question, the curious might consult my

Library edition of Shelley (1882 issue, vol. iv, p. 118).

receiving some Numbers of *The Indicator*, a worthy sequel to the *Adventurer* and *Mirror*, and among them was an article on a walking stick or some such familiar subject which was treated with great fancy and pleased Shelley infinitely.—These *Indicators*, receiving as Shelley did so few journals from home were a resource—Hunt and Shelley corresponded occasionally, but only at intervals, as it would appear from the published Correspondence—Except Hazlitt indeed I never knew an author who had so few Correspondents—Hazlitt told me he thought *it lost time* to write Letters.

I have a note of a conversation I had with Shelley, which arose out of some volumes of Keats's and Leigh Hunt's Poems, of which conversation I will here give the substance.—“There are some people whom all the hellebore in the world cannot cure of their madness. It is singular that England and Italy should have almost simultaneously set about the perversion of their poetry under the crotchet of a reform. We are certainly indebted to the Lakists for a more simple and natural phraseology; but the school that has sprung out of it, have spawned a set of words neither Chaucerian nor Spenserian, words such as ‘glib,’ and ‘flush,’ ‘whiffing,’ ‘perking up,’ ‘swirling,’ ‘light-some’ and ‘brightsome,’ and hundreds of others, which never have been, or ought to be, English.¹ Shabby

¹ These and other such words occur *ad nauseam* in Hunt's *Foliage*; or *Poems Original and Translated* (Ollier, 1818), and notably in *The Nymphs*, of which Shelley wrote to Hunt thus on the 22nd of March 1818:—“I have read *Foliage*—with most of the poems I was already familiar. What a delightful poem *The Nymphs* is, and especially the second part. It is truly *poetical*, in the intense and emphatic sense of the word.

If six hundred miles were not between us, I should say what a pity that *glib* is not omitted and that the poem is not as faultless as it is beautiful. But for fear I should *spoil* your next poem I will not let slip a word on the subject.” The four quotations from Homer (as rendered by Hunt) are at pages 5, 6, 10 and 11 of *Foliage*. “Juno, the glorious bed-fellow of Jove,” as Hunt has it, is not so bad as Medwin

genteel and vulgar sort of writing which Mr. Leigh Hunt adopted upon *principle* and as part of his *system*: however he has lived long enough to see the error of his ways. But the adoption of such a barbarous jargon in translation from the Greek!" and here he turned to a travesty of Homer, whilst tears of laughter ran out of his large, prominent eyes, confirming what Byron says in one of his letters to Moore, that he was facetious about what is serious in the suburb, and read,—

Up! thou most overwhelming of mankind!
Pelides—there's a dreadful roar of men
For thy friend's body, at the ships;

and,

Off with a plague! you scandalous multitude!
Convicted knaves! &c.,
Be quicker—*do*—and help me, evil children!
Down-looking set!

and,

Juno, bedfellow of Jove, &c.

And in a version from another Greek Poet,¹

first having been
With her sweet limbs *inside* of Hippocrene,
And other sacred waters of the hill.—&c., &c.

Shelley lamented that a man of such talent as Leigh Hunt, and who in prose had so exquisite a taste, should have so distorted his poetry. He added, that "that school hated him worse than Byron." But had Shelley been,

makes it appear; and there are in truth some fine passages in these blank verse renderings of Homer. The discomfiture of the Trojans and allies when Achilles, unarmed, shouts from the trench naturally suffers by comparison with Tennyson's rendering of the episode; and yet it is not easy to avoid the conclusion that, when the great laureate

wrote the noble line—

So rang the clear voice of *Æakidēs*,
he had read Hunt's version, in which the line stands thus—

So sprung the clear voice of *Æacides*.

¹ On these lines I have not hit; but I have not gone further afield than *Foliage* to search.

like Keats, subject to the same influences, it is most probable, from here and there a passage in *Rosalind and Helen*,—"A rock of ocean's own," &c., written at the period of his intimacy with his admired friend,—that he would have caught the infection from which his continental abode, his love of the Classics, his cultivation of Italian and Spanish, happily saved him. But even Keats had lived to see the error of his ways—to all but emancipate himself from the trammels of Cockneyism, in *The Pot of Basil*, in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and still more in *Hyperion*, where scarcely a trace of it is left; and which poems Shelley often spoke of with great admiration. "The Italians," Shelley continued to say, "have carried this affectation of phraseology still farther than the sect at home. The so-called Classicists have taken to fishing in the rancid pool of the thirteenth century, and become so prostituted and enslaved to antiquity, as to deem no word admissible in their poems, that has not the sanction of Dante or Petrarch; little regarding the obvious truth, that new images and ideas are continually multiplying, or perceiving that the great objection to the use of the obsolete is, that they render the language entirely different from that of the world and society; in fact, it might belong to some other planet. But that school will pass away.

"Of the three rivals, the French have had more reason for a reformation (though you know I never read French). The misnamed 'golden age' of Louis XIV. corrupted their literature. Poetry was mown with the scythe, and levelled with the roller, till it became as cold and artificial and monotonous as their ornamental gardening—a language of set phrases and forms of speech. They quitted Montaigne for Voltaire, and abandoned words that never ought to have been abandoned; and much praise

is due to the Romanticists for their revival. Thus the Classicists have been driven out of the field. They owe this to an acquaintance with our writers, and something to the Germans."

Shelley preferred Petrarch to any Italian poet; he had his works constantly in hand, and would often spout his *Ode to Italy*—"Italia mia." He was not partial to Tasso or Ariosto, the first he deemed often stilted and full of conceits "and obscured by an assumed and artificial style"; and I have seen Mrs. Shelley read him to sleep over the *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Ariosto he thought "delighted in revenge and cruelty"; and he asks—"Where is the gentle seriousness, the delicate sensibility, the calm and sustained energy without which true greatness cannot be?"

The life Shelley led at Pisa was one of much isolation, but not so complete as it had been. Prince Mavrocordato was his constant visitor; with him he read the *Paradise Lost*, which he infinitely admired, and looked upon as "for all time," one of the grandest conceptions ever struck upon, by the imagination of man—faultless in its structure, and inimitably majestic and sublime in its language, stately and sustained without being pompous or tumid, and whilst abounding in learned idioms and classical lore, free from all pedantry and affectation. Leigh Hunt is of a different way of thinking—He says "something of the Schoolmaster is visible in him"—his faith "a gloomy religious creed"—his style, "is a *study for imagination and elaborate musical structure*—accompanied with a certain oppressiveness of ambitious and conscious power,"—a criticism in which Shelley would have been the last to agree.—So far above all other Poems indeed did he class the *Paradise Lost*, that he even thinks it a sacrilege to name it in speaking of any other Poem, and in his admiration

of *Cain* said we had had nothing like it since the *Paradise Regained*—a work which he frequently read and compared to the calm and tranquil beauty of an autumnal sunset, after the meridian glory and splendour of a summer's day. As both Shelley and Mavrocordato were great linguists, the task was rendered the easier. Speaking of this, Shelley used to say that "in interpreting a foreign tongue, it was a great mutual advantage to know several; for that hence synonymes, which failed in one, could be found in another;" and thus he would often give the exact meaning of a word in Italian, or Spanish, or Latin, or still more frequently in Greek, which he found the best medium as regarded the *Paradise Lost*,—perhaps the most difficult of all poems to explain. Let him who doubts it make the experiment. In return, the prince read with us the *Agamemnon*, though Shelley little approved of his emendations, and would not admit that a modern Greek was a better scholiast than an English scholar. He admitted, "that he might know better the names of plants and flowers, but had no advantage over a foreigner in correcting the faults, or supplying the *hiatuses* in the text; the best proof of which was, that with a solitary exception, Mustoxidi, to whom Monti owed his admirable Translation of Homer, modern Greece has produced no great philologist." Nor could Shelley's ears, accustomed to our pronunciation, endure Mavrocordato's, which the latter contended was the only right one.

Shelley would as little adopt the Italian mode as to Latin, and used to say, "that if we were wrong, we erred with Erasmus." I remember pointing out to him in Plautus, a play on the words *arca* and *arce*, which latter must have been pronounced *arke*. Shelley told me he never read Latin, and looked on the Romans as pale copyists of the Greeks; not that he was insensible to the beauty

of Virgil, but thought his Eclogues poor and artificial compared with the Pastorals of Theocritus. "Greek," said he, "is as superior to Latin, as German is to French; and the Augustan age bears the same relation to that of Lucretius, as Queen Anne's did to the Elizabethan."

But to return to Mavrocordato. There was at that time little prospect of a Greek revolution, though the subject frequently formed part of our conversation. It was a favourite speculation of Shelley's, and with a prophetic spirit he anticipated the emancipation of that oppressed race; and Mavrocordato, warmed by these aspirations for the independence of his country, which indeed filled the hearts of so many of his countrymen, half resolved to believe, almost against reason, that an insurrection in Greece was possible; but had no idea it was so near at hand. Shelley entertained a sincere regard for Prince Mavrocordato, who had very enlarged and enlightened views of the state of Europe. He says of him,—“I know one Greek of the highest qualities, both of courage and conduct, the Prince Mavrocordato, and if the rest be like him, all will go well.” Whether Shelley's opinion of this statesman has been confirmed by his career, it remains for some future Thucydides to decide. The prince was at that time occupied in compiling a dictionary of modern and ancient Greek. Whether he completed it I know not. From time to time he used to shew us a modern Greek translation of the *Iliad*, then publishing in monthly numbers in Paris; but Shelley's knowledge of the language as at present spoken, was very superficial. They used also occasionally to play at chess, but as neither Napoleon nor Charles XII. shone at that game, it is less to be wondered that a poet and politician should not be great proficient in such tactics.

Almost the only person whom he visited this winter was the Countess of Mountcashel.¹ She was a superior and accomplished woman, and a great resource to Shelley who read with her Greek. He told me that she was the source of the inspiration of his *Sensitive Plant*, and that the scene of it was laid in her Garden, as unpoetical a place as could be well imagined—but a true poet can turn everything into beauty; Guido is said to have converted into a Madonna his Colour grinder.

Among his other guests, Rosini (the author of that episode to the *Promessi Sposi*, the *Monocca di Monza*.) made occasionally one; but no intimacy subsisted between them. Sgricci also passed some evenings at his house.

¹ She had been a friend and disciple of Mary Wollstonecraft, so that Mary Shelley's intimacy with her was hereditary. When Mary's father, William Godwin, was a "disconsolate widower," he visited Lady Mountcashel in Ireland, and wrote thus to Marshall in 1800 (*William Godwin &c.*, 1876, vol. i, p. 369): "Lady Mountcashel is a singular character: a democrat and a republican in all their sternness, yet with no ordinary portion either of understanding or good nature. If any of our comic writers were to fall in her company, the infallible consequence would be her being gibbeted in a play. She is uncommonly tall and brawny, with bad teeth, white eyes, and a handsome countenance. She commonly dresses, as I have seen Mrs. Fenwick dressed out of poverty, with a grey gown, and no linen visible; but with gigantic arms, which she commonly folds, naked and exposed almost up to the shoulders." Time is sometimes the poet who can turn the homely exterior of a woman into beauty. Although this lady was evidently not well mated with Lord Mountcashel, Claire gives a much more pleasing

portrait of her at a date twenty years later than that of Godwin's unmannerly picture. She had long been separated from her husband when the Shelleys found her at Pisa. (See note, *ante*, p. 240.) As to the *Sensitive Plant* question, be it recorded that Medwin's paragraph was one of those added in his old age. When he had sought her for news of Shelley (p. 233) she seemed to him "interesting and amiable," as well as "superior and accomplished" enough to read Greek with Shelley. The "source of the inspiration" of a poem is not necessarily the prototype of a character in the poem; and Medwin had a great gift for misunderstanding things said to him by poets. Even Claire's portrait does not help in the least to bring the lady of *The Sensitive Plant* to one's mind. Shelley himself called up a very different image when he wrote to Hunt (*Prose Works*, vol. iv, p. 283) of Jane Williams as "a most delightful person, whom we all agree is the exact antitype of the lady I described in *The Sensitive Plant*, though this must have been a *pure anticipated cognition*, as it was written a year before I knew her."

He was perhaps the greatest of *improvisatores* that ever existed, and gave us more than one specimen of his talent. He used to say that "the God when invoked was always propitious." He was on his way to Lucca, there to give a tragedy on the stage, as he had done at Paris, where his improvisations were taken down in shorthand, and published; but they did not bear strict criticism, though they abound in passages of great beauty. Shelley went to Lucca, to be present at his acting, and came back wonderstruck; of several subjects proposed at random, he selected the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, and I remember Shelley's admiring greatly his comparing Orestes to one high column, all that remained for the support of a house. Shelley said that "his appearance on the stage, his manner of acting, the intonations of his voice, varied to suit the characters he impersonated, had a magical effect, and that his Chorusses in the most intricate metres, were worthy of the Greeks." Had Shelley read this Play, he would in all probability have formed a different estimate of its Merits. Several of those which he improvised at Paris were afterwards published from the Shorthand Transcripts but are totally unfit for the Closet. This was, I believe, the last time Sgricci appeared on the boards of a theatre. He soon after obtained a pension from the Grand-duke of Tuscany, and his pension extinguished his genius. There is a proverb, that singing birds must not be too well fed! He died in 1826 or 1827, still young.

Vaccà, whose medical celebrity was the least of his merits, for he was an ardent lover of Liberty, and enthusiastical for the emancipation of his Country and whom L^d Byron enumerates among the authors of Italy, was also Shelley's particular friend; but his great practice left him little leisure for visits, besides that the state of

his health, that shortly after brought him to an untimely grave, made his professional fatigues require a repose, that even conversation in his leisure hours would have disturbed. He died of consumption—a gradual decay.

The Shelleys kept a Journal—not so much of the events of the day which were unvaried enough—as of the works they read or wrote—a memorial of how they passed the time—a record that it was not consumed in idleness, or frivolity, that every coming day brought with it improvement and information—and thus they laid up a store of wisdom for after years. It was an excellent habit, and well worthy of imitation—but how few would venture to keep such a book, to reperuse its pages—after a lapse of years—Alas! what would it be but a memento of their shame and folly?

Two other persons among my oldest and best friends, Mr. and Mrs. Williams, so often mentioned or alluded to in Shelley's Works, and Mrs. Shelley's Notes, and of whom I shall have somewhat to speak hereafter, added in the spring to their circle.

It was under the idea that their enlightened society and sympathy would tend to chase Shelley's melancholy, that I allured them to Pisa from Chalons. Their arrival was a great event, and they formed a most agreeable addition to our little party.

Shelley had indeed during that winter been subject to a prostration, physical and psychical, the most cruel to witness, though he was never querulous or out of temper, never by an irritable word hurt the feelings of those about him. I have accounted already for the causes of his dejection and despondency. His imagination was his greatest enemy—that poetical temperament which those who possess it not, cannot comprehend, is no envi-

able gift. Well has Bacon said, "There is not in all the Martyrologies that ever were penned so rueful a narrative as that of the lives of Poets." So sensitive was he of external impressions, so magnetic, that I have seen him, after threading the carnival crowd in the Lung' Arno Corsos, throw himself half fainting into a chair, overpowered by the atmosphere of evil passions, as he used to say, in that sensual and unintellectual crowd. Perhaps also there contributed to this feeling of despondency the thought that he also was incapable of enjoying the Carnival, that whilst all around him were busy—happy—he had nothing in common with his fellow men, that Life was meted out to him in a different measure from that of others—that he alone was the *Pariah*, the Outcast.—In order to shelter himself from this feeling, he would fly to his pen or books. At other times I have seen him also very much affected by the sight of the convicts fettered two and two who escorted by Soldiers sweep the streets—and still more so by the clank of their chains, desperate-looking criminals, hardened in, and capable of any crimes—were they, for there was not one perhaps who had not committed a murder. He was indeed ever engaged in composition or reading, scarcely allowing himself time for exercise or air; a book was his companion the first thing in the morning, the last thing at night. He told me he always read himself to sleep. Even when he walked on the *Argine*, his favourite winter walk, he read—sometimes through the streets, and generally had a book on the table by his side at dinner, if his temperate meal could be called one. As has been well said by a Divine, he arose fresh in the morning to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it, and he could truly say that food and rest were not preferred to it. No

part gave him uneasiness but the last, for then he grieved that the work was done.—He was indeed an indefatigable Student. So little impression did that which contributes one of the main delights of ordinary mortals, make on him, that he sometimes asked, “Mary, have I dined?” Wine he never drank; water, which as I have said, is super-excellent at Pisa, being his chief beverage. Not but he was a lover of tea, calling himself sometimes humorously a *Théist*, or saying, There you see I am no *Atheist*. Let not, however, my readers imagine that he was always dejected or despondent,—at times he was as sportive as his child, (with whom he would play by the hour on the floor,) and his wit flowed in a continuous stream,—not that broad humour which is so much in vogue at the present day, but a genuine wit, classical I might say, and refined, that caused a smile rather than a laugh.

I have alluded to his physical sufferings—they, if they did not produce, tended to aggravate his mental ones. He was a martyr to the most painful complaint, Nephritis, for which he had, though with no alleviation, consulted the most eminent medical men, at home and abroad, and now was trying Scott’s vitriolic acid baths, much in vogue. This malady constantly menaced to end fatally. During its paroxysms he would roll on the floor in agony. I had seen animal magnetism practised in India—had myself benefited by it at Geneva, and at his earnest request, consented to try its efficacy on him during his next attack. One of them affected him during an evening, when two ladies, one of whom was Mrs. Shelley, were present. The imposition of my hand on his forehead, instantly put a stop to his spasms, and threw him into a deep slumber, which for want of a better name has been called somnambulism. He slept with his eyes open. During

the continuance of it, I led him from one part of the room to the sofa in the other end ; and when the trance was overpast, after the manner of all somnambulists, he would not admit that he had slept, or that he had made any replies, which I elicited from him by questioning ; those replies being pitched in the same tone of voice as my own. He also during a second experiment improvised some Italian verses, which were faultless, although at that time he had not written one. Shelley had never previously heard of Mesmerism, and I shewed him a treatise I composed, embodying most of the facts recorded by its adepts, and he was particularly struck by a passage in Tacitus, no credulous historian, who seriously related two cases (witnessed he says by many living) in Egypt, that might stagger the most sceptical. "Does it lead to materialism or immaterialism?" Shelley thought to the latter—"that a separation from the mind and body took place—the one being most active and the other an inert mass of matter." He deduced from this phenomenon an additional argument for the immortality of the soul, of which no man was more fully persuaded.

After my departure from Pisa, he was magnetised by a lady, which gave rise to the beautiful stanzas entitled *The Magnetic Lady to her Patient*, and during which operation, he made the same reply to an inquiry as to his disease, and its cure, as he had done to me,—“What would cure me would kill me,”—meaning lithotomy. Mrs. Shelley also magnetised him, but soon discontinued the practice, from finding that he got up in his sleep, and went one night to the window, (fortunately barred,) having taken to his old habit of sleep-walking, which I mentioned, in his boyhood, and also in London.

Shelley showed me a treatise he had written, of some

length, on the Life of Christ, and which Mrs. Shelley should give to the world. In this work he differs little from Paulus, Strauss, and the Rationalists of Germany. The first of these, now deceased, was for fifty years professor of divinity in the university of Heidelberg, and was venerated with honours due to his talents and exemplary virtues; the latter once filled the theological chair at Zurich, from which he was ousted by the Jesuits.*

The new sect which has lately sprung up, with Ronge at its head, whose doctrines were running like wildfire through the Confederation, but are now at the ebb-tide,—this new Catholicism which it was once proposed by the Baden Chamber to make one of the religions of the state, proves the wide dissemination which Rationalism has had, and the revolution in men's minds in Germany. Rongeism is only a more extended form of Unitarianism.

But the Rongeists go far beyond the Unitarians or Rationalists, and have refined away the tenets of our religion, discarding prophecy, miracles, the divinity of our Saviour, and the atonement.

Shelley, in this treatise, does no more than Strauss, Paulus, and Ronge; he indeed treats the subject with more respect than either, and although he may reduce Christianity to a code of morals, how does he differ in so doing from the Unitarians, though I am aware that this by some casuistry they do not admit?

But without entering on a discussion, which might lead me too far out of the track, and disagreeing as I do with the Rationalists *toto cælo*, I can say, with reference

* NOTE.—In speaking of the treatment of Woman by the Greeks—and the present improved condition of the Sex—he attributes this difference to some influence of the doctrines of Jesus Christ—who, he says, alleges the absolute and unconditional equality of all human beings.—See *Essay on the Literature &c. of the Athenians*.

to Shelley, that whatever his early opinions might have been, he on becoming a Platonist, firmly believed in a future state. He used to say, that "no man who reflected could be a Materialist long;" and in his Essay on Poetry,¹ (though he seems in Mrs. Shelley's transcript of the MS. to have made a considerable alteration in the passage afterwards from that originally written, which he shewed to me,) the words ran thus, verbatim: "The persons in whom this power (poetry) abides, may often, as regards many parts of their nature, be Atheists; but though they may deny and abjure, they are compelled to serve, which is seated in the throne of their own soul." His poems abound with the noblest conceptions of a Deity and of Heaven, witness his ode, so entitled, where, after

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Heaven, and all Heaven's company,

he in the next stanza adds,—

Thou art the abode
Of that Power, which is the glass
Where man his image sees.
Generations as they pass,
Worship thee on bended knees;
Their unreturning gods and they

¹ He means, of course, *A Defence of Poetry*, in the last paragraph of which the following sentences occur:—"The persons in whom this power resides, may often, as far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve, the power which is seated on the throne of their own soul." That Medwin's version is a *verbatim* copy of anything Shelley showed him, I do not believe; but it may possibly

be very nearly so, in which case we must assume that the transcriber inadvertently omitted *the power*, or *that*, before *which is seated*. In Mr. A. H. Koszul's useful little book *Shelley's Prose in the Bodleian Manuscripts* (London, Henry Frowde, 1910), I do not find any trace of Medwin's variant. None the less there may be something of the kind in one of the manuscripts, which Mr. Koszul does not profess to have exhausted. Claire Clairmont's transcript (*penes me*) shows no trace of this reading.

Like a river pass away;
 Thou remainest such alway.¹

And in the *Adonais*,—

The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

Let these passages suffice, though I might multiply them *ad infinitum*. Return we to life and its realities.

Shelley used to say, that every city or town had its Devil or its Diavolessa—we have no word in our language for the fiend feminine. Monk Lewis has shewn us, even when they come in the shape of the Madonna, how much they are to be dreaded, even by an Ambrosio. Byron thought the viaggiatory English old maids, who scour the continent, and fix themselves for the time being in all parts of it, were only incarnations of evil spirits. I am not so *ungallant*. But of the male devils, Goldoni has given us a specimen in his *Bottega di Caffè*, and Poole in his *Paul Pry*—two devils who have much in common, and bear a strong family likeness. Their name is Legion, though they differ from each other as much as Asmodeus does from Mephistophiles. The term *seccatura*, or drying up of all our faculties, mental and bodily, seems to offer an abstract idea of the effects they

¹ These snatches from the *Ode to Heaven* seem to me worth leaving uncorrected as an example of Medwin's sheer unintelligent misquotations from memory. After changing *Earth* to *Heaven* twice in the first couplet, he disfigures the "next stanza" by substituting *Where* for *Wherein*, *image* for *nature*, *on* for *with*, *unreturning* for *unremaining*, and *pass* for *roll*. That none of these are genuine variants, such as Medwin occasionally annexed from his cousin in Italy, is pretty clear from

internal evidence, and is borne out by the extraordinarily interesting draft of the poem in Mr. Bixby's Note Book No. 2. In all its mass of substitutions and cancelled readings, there is no trace of any one of these of Medwin's. The almost entire stanza he misquotes ends with the following notable variant of the triplet :

Thou remainest such alway,
 But their fleeting works and they
 Like a river roll away.

produce. This preamble brings me to the Devil of Pisa. Pacchiani was about fifty years of age, somewhat above the common height, with a figure boney and angular, and covered with no more superfluous flesh than a prize-fighter. His face was dark as that of a Moor, his features marked and regular, his eyes black and gloomy. He always reminded me of one of Titian's portraits (his family had been Venetians,) stepping out of its frame. Had he lived when Venice was governed by the Tré, he would have made a Loredano, and might have sate to Anne Radclyffe for a Schedoni; but to descend to modern times, during the reign of Austrian despotism he was admirably calculated for a spy, or *calderai*o,—perhaps he might be one. "*Chi lo sa.*" Nature certainly never designed him for a divine. As to his religion, it was about on a par with that of Il Abbate Casti, (*Casti a non casto*, as *lucus a non lucendo*.) of whom he was afterwards a worthy successor, in his native city, Florence. But at Pisa, *Il Signore Professore* was the title by which he was generally known; a professor, like many other professors and lecturers, at least in Italy, who had made a sinecure of his office, that of *Belles Lettres*, and only mounted the *Cathedra* once, during the many years that he touched his poor emoluments; for the Transalpine universities are not quite so richly endowed as our own. Not that this neglect of his duties would have affected his appointment, but as he told me, he lost it by an irresistible *bon mot*. During one of his midnight orgies, which he was in the habit of celebrating with some of the most dissolute of the students, he was interrogated in the darkness, by the patrol in the streets of Pisa, as to who and what he was; to which questioning he gave the following reply: "Son' un uomo publico, in una strada publica, con una

donna publica.”¹ This public avowal cost him his chair. But it gave him *éclat*, and did not lose him his friends, or exclude him from the houses where he was the spiritual guide and confessor. There were, it is true, two reasons why he was tolerated in good society, (which Casti says is to be found where he places Don Juan, below,)—his pen and his tongue—the dread of both. His epigrams were *sanglantes*, and he gave *soubriquets* the most happy for those who offended him; as an instance of which, he most happily styled a captain of our navy, *il dolce capitano*; a bye-word that stuck to him through life, and always excited a smile at his expense whenever he appeared. He was a good poet, if one might judge from the quotations he was in the habit of making from his tragedies, which he continually talked about, and which Madame de Staël, who knew him, used to call his *imaginary* ones, for not a line of them was ever published—perhaps written. His talent was conversation—a conversation full of repartee, and sparkling with wit; and his information (he was a man of profound erudition, vast memory, and first-rate talent,) made him almost oracular. Shelley, when Pacchiani first became an *habitué* at his house, was charmed with him, and listened with rapt attention to his eloquence, which he compared to that of Coleridge. It was a swarm of ideas singularly extravagant, but which he contrived to weave into his argument with marvellous embroidery. Now he plunged into abysses but to lighten other abysses; and his words, like a torrent—for there was no stopping him when fairly rushing onwards—carried all before them.

¹ Under the date December 23, 1820, Claire writes in her journal another “Bon Mot of Pacchiani’s,” which I give quite literally in its

imperfection—

Di femmini ha Italia molte e
graziosissime
Ma donne Signor Mio pochissime.

It was this gift of eloquence that made him for a time welcome at Shelley's, where he passed many an evening in the week—(I think I see him now, dissecting the snipes with his long, boney, snuffy fingers—for he never in the operation made use of a knife or fork); at first I say,—for he had in the outset sufficient tact (no one knew mankind better) to keep in the background the revolting vices which were familiar to him and disfigured his character. He had a predilection for our *compatriotes*, with and without the *e*, but particularly patronized the *Belle Inglese*, as he always called English women; and after the Italian fashion, soon familiarly called Mrs. Shelley, *La Signora Maria*. Wherever he once got the *entrée*, he was a *sine qua non*, a “*fa tout*.” He had always some poor devil of low origin, to recommend as a master of his language, receiving under the rose, part of the lesson money. He was never at a loss to find some *Palazzo* to be let, getting a monthly *douceur* out of the rent, from the landlord; for a picture fancier, he had always at hand some mysterious *Marchese* or *Marchesa*, ready to part with a Carlo Dolce or Andrea del Sarto, or Allori—*originals* of course. He could dilate for hours on the Venus of the Tribune, the Day and Night of Michael Angelo, the Niobe—knew the history of every painter and painting in the galleries of the Uffizzi and Pitti, better than Vasari, or his successor Rosini; in short he was a *Mezzano*, *Cicerone*, *Conosciatore*, *Dilettante*, and, I might add, *Ruffiano*.

I have perhaps at too great length botched a sketch of the ex Professor, but as the world is indebted to him for the *Epipsychidion*, I think myself in gratitude bound not to pass him over without a record, and if I had Mrs. Shelley's *Valperga*, I could have spared my readers

my own "*studio studiato*," for he is there drawn to the life.

Pacchiani¹ was *amico di casa* and confessor to a noble family, one of the most distinguished for its antiquity of any at Pisa, where its head then filled a post of great authority. By his first countess he had two grown-up daughters, and in his old age had the boldness, the audacity I might say, to take unto himself a wife not much older than either. This lady, whose beauty did not rival that of the Count's children, was naturally jealous of their charms, and deemed them dangerous rivals in the eyes of her Cavaliere; and exerting all her influence over her infatuated husband, persuaded him, though their education was completed, to immure them in two convents (*pensions*, I should say, or as they are called, *conservatorios*) in his native city. The Professor, who had known them from infancy, and been their instructor in languages and polite literature, made the *Contessinas* frequent subjects of conversation. He told us that the father was not over rich, owing to his young wife's extravagance; that he was avaricious withal, and did not like to disburse their dowries, which, as fixed by law, must be in proportion to the father's fortune, and was waiting till some one would take them off his hands without a *dote*. He spoke most enthusiastically of the beauty and accomplishments of Emilia, the eldest, adding, that she had been confined for two years in the convent of St. Anne. "Poverina," he said, with a deep

¹ In this place the name *Pacchina* was written in the margin. The original edition of 1847 gives no name either to the Professor or to the Convent—merely "P——" and "St. A——." Thirty years

later there was no need for concealment; but in filling blanks of this kind Medwin slipped occasionally. There is no doubt that *Pacchiani* is the right name.

sigh, "she pines like a bird in a cage—ardently longs to escape from her prison-house,—pines with *ennui*, and wanders about the corridors like an unquiet spirit; she sees her young days glide on without an aim or purpose. She was made for love. Yesterday she was watering some flowers in her cell—she has nothing else to love but her flowers—'Yes,' said she, addressing them, 'you are born to vegetate, but we thinking beings were made for action—not to be penned up in a corner, or set at a window to blow and die.' A miserable place is that convent of St. Anne," he added, "and if you had seen, as I have done, the poor pensionnaires shut up in that narrow, suffocating street, in the summer, (for it does not possess a garden,) and in the winter as now, shivering with cold, being allowed nothing to warm them but a few ashes, which they carry about in an earthen vase,—you would pity them."

This little story deeply interested Shelley, and Pacchiani proposed that the poet and myself should pay the captive a visit in the *parloir*.

The next day, accompanied by the priest, we came in sight of the gloomy, dark convent, whose ruinous and dilapidated condition told too plainly of confiscation and poverty. It was situate in an unfrequented street in the suburbs, not far from the walls. After passing through a gloomy portal, that led to a quadrangle, the area of which was crowded with crosses, memorials of old monastic times, we were soon in the presence of Emilia. The fair recluse reminded me (and with her came the remembrance of Mephisto) of Margaret.

Time seemed to her

To crawl with shackled feet, and at her window
She stands, and watches the heavy clouds on clouds,

Passing in multitudes o'er the old town-walls.
 And all the day, and half the night she sings,
 "Oh, would I were a little bird!" At times
 She's cheerful,—but the fit endures not long,
 For she is mostly sad,—then she'll shed tears,—
 And after she has wept her sorrows out,
 She is as quiet as a child.—THE AUTHOR.

Emilia was indeed lovely and interesting. Her profuse black hair, tied in the most simple knot, after the manner of a Greek Muse in the Florence gallery, displayed to its full height her brow, fair as that of the marble of which I speak. She was also of about the same height as the antique. Her features possessed a rare faultlessness, and almost Grecian contour, the nose and forehead making a straight line,—a style of face so rare, that I remember Bartolini's telling Byron that he had scarcely an instance of such in the numerous casts of busts which his studio contained. Her eyes had the sleepy voluptuousness, if not the colour of Beatrice Cenci's. They had indeed no definite colour, changing with the changing feeling, to dark or light, as the soul animated them. Her cheek was pale, too, as marble, owing to her confinement and want of air, or perhaps "to thought." There was a lark in the *parloir*, that had lately been caught. "Poor prisoner," said she, looking at it compassionately, "you will die of grief! How I pity thee! What must thou suffer, when thou hearest in the clouds, the songs of thy parent birds, or some flocks of thy kind on the wing, in search of other skies—of new fields—of new delights! But like me, thou wilt be forced to remain here always—to wear out thy miserable existence here. Why can I not release thee?"

Might not Shelley have taken from this pathetic lamentation, his—

Poor captive bird! who from thy narrow cage,
 Pourest such music as might well assuage
 The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,
 Were they not deaf to thy sweet melody?

and the sequel,—

High spirit-winged heart! who dost for ever
 Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,
 . . Till thy panting, wounded breast,
 Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest.

Such was the impression of the only visit I paid Emilia; but I saw her some weeks after, at the end of a Carnival, when she had obtained leave to visit Mrs. Shelley, companioned by the abbess. In spite of the Contessina's efforts to assume cheerfulness, one might see she was very, very sad; but she made no complaint; she had grown use [*sic*] to suffering. It had become her element.

Mrs. Shelley and Shelley frequently went to the convent, to endeavour by their sympathy to console the unhappy girl. Nor were they her only sympathizers: Lady Charlotte Bury's daughters visited her also.¹ Her condition was much aggravated by there being no one within the convent whom she could make a companion or confidante, for her fellow-prisoners were of a low class, and such as a nobleman's daughter could not associate with. Shelley felt deeply the fate of poor Emilia, frequently wrote to her, and received from her in reply, bouquets of flowers, in return for one of which he sent her the following exquisite Madrigal.²

¹ Claire Clairmont, according to her manuscript journal in my possession, might have been added to the list of Emilia's visitors.

² In this instance Medwin was certainly doing his best to quote the orthodox text of one of the

loveliest of all love-lyrics. He blundered at the last word, *you*, which should be: *nee*, probably thinking it needful that there should be one more rhyme to *dew*, *drew*, and *new*, and not a recurrence to the *me* and *be* rhyme, with its main-

Madonna! wherefore hast thou sent to me,
 Sweet basil, and mignonette,
 Embleming Love and Health, which never yet
 In the same wreath might be?
 Alas! and they are wet!
 Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?
 For never rain or dew
 Such fragrance drew
 From plant or flower—the very doubt endears
 My sadness ever new—
 The sighs I breathe—the tears I shed for you.

In his correspondence, he says, "But Emilia is not merely beautiful, she has cultivated her mind beyond what I have ever met with in Italian women." She was well-read in the poets of her land, was made for love, had the purest and most sublime conceptions of the master-passion, and without having read the *Symposium* of Plato, wrote the following Apostrophe to Love, which I have attempted to put into our runic tongue, but which is but a pale reflex of the original.

IL VERO AMORE.

Amore, alma del mondo, amore sorgente di ogni buono, di ogni bello, che sarebbe l'Universo se ad esso mancasse la tua face creatrice? Un orribile deserto! allora, lungi da esso, anco la sola ombra è del buono e del bello, e d'ogni felicità. Di quell' amore Io parlo che impossessandosi di tutto il nostro cuore, dell' intiera volontà nostra,

tenance of the second person singular. Curiously enough, while drafting this poem in Mr. Bixby's Note Book No. 1, the one which had undergone complete immersion in water, Shelley himself had committed the offence of inconsistency here set to his account by a constitutionally inexact chronicler. Among his many rejected passages may still be deciphered the poor opening:

Oh my beloved why have you

Sent sweet basil & mignonette?
 Why when I kiss their leaves find
 I them wet
 With thine adored tears dearer
 than heavens dew?

The pages where this and other still poorer things occur afford a wonderful lesson; but the divine little song itself was not there finished; and we may feel certain that Mary, whom Medwin ostensibly follows, had a perfect copy in which the line ends properly with *thee*.

ci sublima, e c'inalza al di sopra di ogni altro individuo dell' istessa nostra specie, e tutto energetico, tutto immenso, tutto puro, tutto divino, non ci ispira se non, se azioni magnanime, e degne de seguaci di questo soave e onnipotente nume. L'Amante no, non e confuso con gli uomini, non trascina l'anima sua, ma la inalza, la spinge, e la corona di luce, all' sorriso della Divinità.

Esso doventa un essere sorprendente, e talvolta incomprendibile. L'Universo, il vasto Universo, non più capace a racchiudere le sue idee, i suoi affetti, svanisce a suoi occhi. L'anima amante sdegna essere ristretta, niente può ritenerla. Essa si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito, un mondo, tutto per essa, diverso assai di questo oscuro e pauroso Baratro, assorta di continuo in un estase dolcissima, è veramente beata. Tutto ciò che non ha rapporto all' oggetto di sua tenerezza, tutto ciò che non è quell' oggetto adorato, comparisce un piccolo punto a suoi occhi. Ma dove è colui, suscettivole di tale amore? Dove chi possa ispirarlo? Oh amore! Io non sono che amore. Io non posso esistere senza amare. La mia anima, il mio corpo, tutti i miei pensieri ed affetti, tutto ciò che Io sono, si trasforma in un solo sentimento di amore—e questo sentimento durerà in eterno. Senza amare, la vita mi divrebbe insopportabile, il mondo un inospito spaventoso e desolato deserto, sparso soltanto di spettri, si terribili alla mia vista che per fuggarli, io mi getterei nella misteriosa ma tranquilla magione di morte. Ah sì, io preferesco le dolce pene dell' amore, i continui palpiti che lo accompagnano, il timore di esso inseperabile, ad una per me stupida calma, ed a tutti i piaceri che posson recare tutte le altre passioni sodisfatte, tutti i beni (se senza amore può essere alcun bene,) che il mondo apprezza e de' quali e avido.

Ma quanto tu siei profanato, O Amore! quali oltraggj fanno i figli della terra al tuo nome divino! Sovente aglj affetti i pui illeciti, alle azioni le più vituperose, al delitto (oh! attentato esecrando) all' istesso delitto si dà il nome di amore, si osa dire che egli lo ha cagionato. Ahi empj! sacrileghi! inaudita bestemmia! voi non che risenterlo, non comprendete neppure ciò che la parola amore significhi. Amore vuol di virtù, amore ispira virtù, ed e la sorgente delle azioni le più magnanime, della vera felicità. Amore é un fuoco, che bruciando non distrugge, una mista di piacere e di pena, una pena che porta piacere un' Essenza eterna, spirituale, infinita, pura, celeste. Questo sì è il vero, il solo amore, quell' sentimento che soltanto può riempire intieramente il vuoto dell' anima, quell' vuoto orribile peggior della morte. Ogni altro sentimento da questo dissimile, da questo men puro, non merita il sacro nome di amore, e gli empj che lo

profanero, e lo denigrano, saranno punite da questo potentissimo nume, et meriteranno l'eterna perdizione. Ove l'anima che è sensibile, che cerca amore, si trova una volta nell' abisso della desolazione, e ove il cuore sia deserto di questo dolce fuoco, o trovi infidele l'oggetto di sua tenerezza, questa anima miserabile cerchi, (almeno io gli il consiglio) cerchi almeno, il suo rifugio nella tomba, e si pascoli di esso, come dell' ultima consolazione !

THE TRUE LOVE.

Love ! soul of the world ! Love, the source of all that is good, of all that is lovely ! what would the universe be, failing thy creative flame ? A horrible desert. But far from this, it is the sole shadow of all goodness, of all loveliness, and of all felicity. Of that love I speak, that possessing itself of all our soul, of our entire will, sublimates and raises one, above every other individual of the same species ; and all energetic, all pure, all divine, inspires none but actions that are magnanimous, and worthy of the followers of that sweet and omnipotent deity. The lover ! no ! he is not confounded with the herd of men, he does not degrade his soul, but elevates, drives on, and crowns it with light at the smile of the divinity. He becomes a supereminent being, and as such altogether incomprehensible. The universe—the vast universe, no longer capable of bounding his ideas, his affections, vanishes from before his sight. The soul of him who loves disdains restraint—nothing can restrain it. It lances itself out of the created, and creates in the infinite a world for itself, and for itself alone, how different from this obscure and fearful den !—is in the continued enjoyment of the sweetest extacy, is truly happy. All that has no relation to the object of its tenderness—all that is not that adored object, appears an insignificant point to his eyes. But where is he, susceptible of such love ? Where ? Who is capable of inspiring it ? Oh love ! I am all love. I cannot exist without love ! My soul—my mortal frame—all my thoughts and affections, all that which I am, transfigures itself into one sole sentiment of love, and that sentiment will last eternally. Without Love, life would become to me insupportable—the world an inhospitable and desolate desert, only haunted by spectres, so terrible to my sight, that to fly from them, I could cast myself into the mysterious but tranquil abode of death. Ah ! yes ! I prefer the sweet pains of love, the continual throbbings that accompany, the fear inseparable from it, to a to me stupid calm, and to all the pleasures that can supply the gratification of all other passions, all the goods (if without love there can be any good) which the world prizes and covets.

But how art thou profaned, O Love! what outrages do not the children of the earth commit in thy name divine! Often and often to affections the most illicit, to actions the most vile and degrading, to crime—ah! execrable iniquity! when even to crime itself they give the name of Love, and dare to tax it with the commission of crime! Alas! unheard-of blasphemy. Impious and sacrilegious that ye are, you not only feel it not, but comprehend not even what the word Love signifies. Love has no wish but for virtue—Love inspires virtue—Love is the source of actions the most magnanimous, of true felicity—Love is a fire that burns and destroys not, a mixture of pleasure and of pain, a pain that brings pleasure, an essence eternal, spiritual, infinite, pure, celestial. This is the true, the only Love,—that sentiment which can alone entirely fill up the void of the soul—that horrible void, worse than death. Every other sentiment dissimilar from this, than this less pure, deserves not the sacred name of Love; and they who impiously profane and defile it, shall be punished by that most mighty of Divinities, and shall merit eternal perdition. Where the soul that is feelingly alive seeks for love, and finds itself in the abyss of desolation, and where the heart is divested of this sweet fire, or finds faithless the object of its tenderness,—that miserable soul, let it seek (at least I so counsel it), let it seek, I say, its refuge in the tomb, and feed upon it as its last consolation.

This admirable piece of eloquence was perhaps the source of the inspiration of the *Epipsychidion*, a poem that combines the pathos of the *Vita Nuova* of Dante with the enthusiastic tenderness of Petrarch. The *Epipsychidion* is the apotheosis of love—Emilia a mere creature of his imagination, in whom he idealised Love in all its intensity of passion. His feeling towards the Psyche herself, was, as may be seen by Letter LX. of his correspondence, a purely Platonic one. He calls the *Epipsychidion* a mystery, and says, “as to real flesh and blood, you know that I do not deal in those articles. Expect nothing human or earthly from me.” &c. His love for Emilia, if such it can in the general acceptation of the term be called, was of the kind described in the Symposium by Socrates, who defines it “as a desire of

generation in the Beautiful." What is it but a comment on the words of Socrates as derived from Diotima—"When any one ascending from a correct system of love, begins to contemplate this supreme beauty, he already touches the consummation of his labour. For such as discipline themselves on this system, or are conducted by another beginning to ascend through those transitory objects that are beautiful, towards that which is Beauty itself, proceeding as on steps, from the love of that form to two, and from that of two to all those forms that are beautiful, and from beautiful forms to beautiful habits and institutions, and from institutions to beautiful doctrines, until from the meditation of many doctrines, they arrive at that which is nothing else than the doctrine of the Supreme Beauty itself and in the contemplation of which at length they repose—no longer unworthily and meanly enslaving themselves to the attractions of one form in love, nor one subject of discipline and science," &c. We thus better may comprehend a passage, which taken literally may lead to false constructions.

Love is like understanding, that grows bright
 Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,
 Imagination, that from earth and sky,
 And from the depths of human phantasy,
 As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
 The universe with glorious beams, and kills
 Error, the worm, with many a sunlike arrow
 Of its reverberated lightnings. Narrow
 The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
 The life that wears, the spirit that creates
 One object, and one form, and builds thereby
 A sepulchre for its eternity.

And he goes on to say,—

Mind from its object differs most in this:
 Evil from good—misery from happiness—

The baser from the nobler; the impure
And frail from what is clear and must endure.

In this doctrine he also developes his favourite doctrine of an antenatal life, of which I have already spoken at some length.

O too late
Beloved! O too soon adored by thee, [*sic for me!*]
For in the fields of Immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
A divine presence in a place divine;
Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
A shadow of that substance from its birth.

Coleridge was, as I have said, his precursor in such ideas, and a teacher of the *Εν και παν*, the one and all—the all in one.¹

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,—
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar;
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But amid [*sic for trailing*] clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

Dryden also in his sublime Ode to the memory of Mrs. Killigrew says—

But if the preëxisting Soul
Was formed at first with myriads more &c.

In accordance with these ideas, Shelley thought that to pass from one state of existence to another, was not death, but a new development of life; that we must love as we live, through all eternity; and that they who have not this persuasion, know nothing of life, nothing of love;

¹ Perhaps Medwin had not really forgotten that his illustrative quotation was from Wordsworth's great ode—*Intimations of Immortality from*

Recollections of Early Childhood—a poem almost as full of household words as *Hamlet* or Gray's *Elegy*.

that they who do not make the universe a fountain whence they may literally draw new life and love, know nothing of one or the other, and are not fated to know anything of it. The words are not his, but they shadow out what I heard him better express.

This poem, or rhapsody, incomprehensible to the general class of readers, from a defect in the common organ of perception, for the ideas of which it treats, fell dead from the press. I believe that not a copy of it was sold, not a single review noticed it—One of the many proofs that the public ear is deaf to the finest accords of the lyre.

In the *Epipsychidion* Shelley exhibits the same imperious longing to fly, beyond the created world into another Universe more perfect, such as the Soul that loves pants to enjoy. We find in it the same hope of a solitary paradise so often dreamed of by young hearts when the storms and frosts of life have never obtained access, where the stars in the unalterable azure smile unceasingly on the lovers for ever intoxicated with each other, when the flowers of thought shoot forth by the side of terrestrial flowers, when the Nightingale, that invented the Songship of happy nights, marries with the far-off murmur of the waves the flood of her joyous Serenades. Shelley invites the beautiful recluse to an existence of love and leisure—The bark is waiting ready, the wind is fair—which wait for you, unfortunate victim. Hark the Song of the Mariners, behold the Halcyons, a fortunate presage hovering over the calm surface of the waters. Soul of my Soul, let us hide our happiness beneath the shadows of the aromatic woods of our blooming isle.—It waits for us there below, at the Eastern horizon reddening in the fires of morning like a bride in the arms

of her adventurous spouse who is about to lift the last veil.¹ But Emilia's term of bondage was on the eve of expiring; she was affianced to a man whom she had never seen, and who was incapable of appreciating her talents or her virtues. She was about to be removed from the scenes of her youth, the place of her birth, her father on whom she doted, and to be buried in the Maremma. The day of her wedding was fixed, but a short respite took place for a reason mentioned in a letter of Shelley to Mrs. Shelley (from Ravenna), where he says, "Have you heard anything of my poor Emilia? from whom I got a letter the day of my departure, saying that her marriage was deferred on account of the illness of her *sposo*!" and in another letter he expresses, what in the fragment of Ginevra, too well typified the fate of that unfortunate lady, the poor sacrificed Emilia,—his fears as to what she was destined to suffer. The sacrifice was at length completed, and she was soon as much forgotten as if she had never existed—though not by Shelley.

I am enabled to detail the consequences of this ill-starred union, to finish her biography. Some years after, Pacchiani, who had several times during his feverish existence, been reduced to abject poverty and distress, by his reckless extravagance, his rage for travelling, though his journies never extended beyond Leghorn on the one hand, and Florence on the other, and where he used to indulge in all manner of excesses, and which brought

¹ This paragraph shows how vulgar-looking a bouquet of the most beautiful cut flowers may be made by unsuitable arrangement. The paragraph was not originally in Medwin's book, but was added

in the margin in his later days. The reader will no doubt turn to line 407 of *Epipsychidion*, and read to the end in Shelley's own exquisite phrases.

about the same result, the sequestration of his ecclesiastical preferment, and imprisonment by his creditors till his debts were liquidated—made his appearance at the capital of Tuscany, where I then was. He found at Florence a wider field for his operations, and shewed himself a not less active and busy-bodied *Diavolo incarnato*. He did not forget our old acquaintance at Shelley's, and haunted me like an unquiet spirit. One day, when at my house, he said mysteriously,—“I will introduce you to an old friend—come with me.” The coachman was ordered to drive to a part of the city with which I was a stranger, and drew up at a country house in the suburbs. The villa, which had once boasted considerable pretensions, was in great disrepair. The court leading to it, overgrown with weeds, proved that it had been for some years untenanted. An old woman led us through a number of long passages and rooms, many of the windows in which were broken, and let in the cold blasts from “the wind-swept Apennine;” and opening at length a door, ushered us into a chamber, where a small bed and a couple of chairs formed the whole furniture. The couch was covered with white gauze curtains, to exclude the gnats; behind them was lying a female form. She immediately recognised me—was probably prepared for my visit—and extended her thin hand to me in greeting. So changed that recumbent figure, that I could scarcely recognise a trace of the once beautiful Emilia. Shelley's evil augury had been fulfilled, she had found in her marriage all that he had predicted; for six years she led a life of purgatory, and had at length broken the chain, with the consent of her father; who had lent her this long disused and dilapidated *Campagne*. I might fill many a page by

speaking of the tears she shed over the memory of Shelley, —but enough—she did not long enjoy her freedom. Shortly after this interview, she was confined to her bed; the seeds of *malaria*, which had been sown in the Maremma, combined with that all-irremediable malady, broken-heartedness, brought on a rapid consumption.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn.¹

The old woman, who had been her nurse, made me a long narration of her last moments, as she wept bitterly. I wept too, when I thought of Shelley's *Psyche*, and his *Epipsychidion*.

But back to Pisa. Some little time before quitting it, we had several conversations respecting Keats, and the *Endymion*; the attack on which poem in *The Quarterly* had been, though differing in degree, of a most unworthy character. Shelley felt for Keats much more than he had done for himself, under a similar infliction, and wrote a letter, a copy of which Mrs. Shelley found among Shelley's papers, and to which she appends the remark, that "it was never sent." There she was right, but with some trifling alterations he did address a letter to the same purport,—almost indeed a transcript of the other,—to Mr. Southey, appealing to him, as an influential person in the conduct of the Review, against the verdict of that tribunal; and this very letter, though Mrs. Shelley was perfectly ignorant of both circumstances, *did* obtain an answer;² and which answer, instead of being a justifi-

¹ Keats's *Isabella*, stanza lxiii.

² It is not necessary to attach any serious credence to this statement. The letter *not* sent to *The Quarterly* contained a paragraph about the attack on Shelley; and the letter to Southey most nearly answering to Medwin's description is that of the

26th of June 1820, first published by Professor Dowden, with Southey's reply, in an Appendix to *The Correspondence of Robert Southey with Caroline Bowles* (Dublin, 1881). A later letter of Southey's in the same Appendix certainly deals with the Harriett question in a somewhat coarse and

cation of the writer of the article, contained a most unjustifiable attack on Shelley himself; alluding to some opinions of his expressed at Keswick, so many years before, from which he hinted that the unhappy catastrophe that befel Shelley's first wife might have arisen. Shelley shewed me this answer, a more thoroughly unfeeling one never was it my fate to peruse. Indifferent as Shelley had been to the slanderous paper, which had emanated from the pages of the *Quarterly*, as coming from an anonymous libeller, this letter, signed by Southey, tore open anew the wounds of his heart, and affected him for some time most keenly. And to it, Byron alludes in the *Conversations*, with just and severe reprobation, saying,—“Shame on the man who could revive the memory of a misfortune of which Shelley was altogether innocent, and ground scandal upon falsehood! What! have the audacity to confess, that he had for ten years treasured up some observations of Shelley's, made at his own table!” Who the author of the second of these critiques might have been, of course can never be known to a certainty. Byron attributed it (see *Don Juan*,¹ or rather, would you could see, reader, as I have seen, the expunged lines in the stanza, about “a priest

brutal manner. I scarcely think we shall find anything more nearly resembling Medwin's tale than Mr. Dowden has there given us.

¹ The 57th and 58th stanzas in Canto xi of *Don Juan* as now published will be found disappointing when referred to in this connexion: they deal with the Rev. Dr. George Croly and the Very Rev. Henry Hart Milman, talk about “poets almost clergymen, or wholly,” characterize Croly as one who “shoes” Pegasus “with stilts,” and Milman as—

that artificial hard

Labourer in the same vineyard,
though the vine
Yields him but vinegar for his
reward—

That neutralized dull Dorus of
the Nine,
That swarthy Sporus, neither man
nor bard;

That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for
every line :—

but when Byron wrote thus he thought Milman had influenced Murray against going on with the publication of *Don Juan*, and had

almost a priest;") to a divine, and poet; and Shelley was fully persuaded the articles on himself and Keats, were both by the same hand. If the parentage was rightly affixed, I do not envy the author. "Miserable man!" says Shelley, in his Preface to *Adonais*, "you, one of the meanest, have defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God! nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers but used none." To prove¹ that he thought this man and his own base and unprincipled calumniator, one and the same, may appear from—

Live thou! whose infamy is not thy shame!
 Live! *fear no heavier chastisement from me!*
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill thy venom, when its fangs o'erflow.
 Remorse, and self-contempt, shall cling to thee.
 Hot shame shall burn upon thy secret brow—
 And like a beaten hound, tremble thou shalt as now.

written the article in *The Quarterly* which his Lordship found it convenient to persist in regarding as the cause of Keats's death—witness the verses—

Who killed John Keats?—

and the brilliant 60th stanza in this same Canto xi, with its sententious couplet—

Tis strange the mind, that very
 fiery particle,
 Should let itself be snuffed out by
 an article.

Had Medwin had the advantage of reading the MS. from which Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (*Byron's Poetry*, vol. vi, p. 446) has given a curious cancelled reading for this couplet?—

'Tis strange the mind should at
 such phrases quell its

Chief impulse with a few, frail,
 paper pellets.

The writer of the article on Keats in *The Quarterly*—the "noteless blot"—was John Wilson Croker, Secretary of the Admiralty, and author of *The Battle of Talavera*.

¹ The omission of the third and fourth lines—

Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
 But be thyself, and know thyself
 to be!—

from stanza xxxvii of *Adonais* may give a sort of shadowy support to this position by removing the expression *a remembered name*, in the singular; but I do not see what the historian gained by altering *fame* to *shame* in the first line, or the *venom* to *thy venom*. The whole treatment, indeed, looks like a combination of carelessness and cunning.

The critique was so far an unjust one, on the *Endymion*, that, with its faults, it was evident that that work was the production of a true poet, one at least who had in him all the elements of poetry,—chaotic, indeed, but capable of being reduced to a world of beauty; and if the article had been written in that kind and parental spirit that becomes an older reviewer to a young writer,—if his object had been to remove the film from those eyes that flattery had blinded, to lead him to form his style on better models, to draw from purer sources,—less blame would have attached to the critique. Shelley confesses that *Endymion* is a poem considerably defective, and that perhaps it deserved as much censure as the pages of the review record against it; but not to mention that, there is a certain contemptuousness of phraseology from which it is difficult for a critic to abstain, in the review of *Endymion*, he does not think that the writer has given it due praise; and in his letter above referred to, I remember his instancing the Hymn to Pan as “a proof of the promise of ultimate excellence.” Shelley also adds, that there was no danger of the *Endymion* becoming a model of that false taste with which he owns it is replenished, confessing that “the canons of taste to which Keats had conformed in this composition, were the very reverse of his own.”

Shelley, together with Byron, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Mr. Brown, and others, seems to have been mispersuaded, that the article in *The Quarterly* produced the effect of either embittering the existence of Keats, or of inducing consumption. That insidious disease was hereditary in his family, and did not show itself for eighteen months after the appearance of that number of *The Quarterly*. Mr. Finch says that “he nursed a deeply-rooted disgust

to life and the world, owing to his having been infamously treated by the very persons whom his generosity had rescued from want and woe." Whether this was the case, I know not, and it would be needless and uninteresting to the public, to drag forth his private wrongs, whatever they might be; but for a time, at least,—however ultimately his property might have been restored to him,—he was almost left destitute, and before leaving England, had not a hundred pounds he could call his own. His highly sensitive and proud spirit, that brooked not dependence, and the prospect of the future, preyed on him like eating fire.

The blow was a death-blow. It is the last drop in the cup that fills the measure, and makes it overflow—the last grain of sand that marks the hour,—and from that moment his were counted. But the review in question was a mere unit, and not the last in the glass.

I am fortunately enabled, from a most authentic source, to set this matter at rest—by the kind communication of a lady who knew him well, better indeed than any other individual out of his own family.¹ To confirm the else solitary opinion of Mr. Dilke, she says,—

"I did not know Keats at the time the review appeared. It was published, if I remember rightly, in June 1818. However great his mortification might have been, he was not, I should say, of a character likely to have displayed it in the manner mentioned in Mrs. Shelley's Remains of her husband. Keats, soon after the appearance of the review in question, started on a walking expedition into the Highlands. From thence he was forced to return, in consequence of the illness of a brother, whose death a few months afterwards affected him strongly."

In a folio edition of Shakspeare, which I have spoken of,² belonging to Keats,—in *King Lear*, the words, "*Poor*

¹ Mrs. Lindon, formerly Fanny Brawne.

² See *post*, p. 304. The folio was

then Mrs. Lindon's. It was acquired by the late Sir Charles Dilke from her representatives.

Tom" (his brother's baptismal name) are underlined. How will a word sometimes call up a world of sad thoughts and poignant regrets! that familiar "*Poor Tom*" revived in Keats the memory of his brother. The passage has also a note of admiration in the margin, and I think I can trace the marks of a tear.

The following extract of a poem, not published in his works, proves an intensity of feeling even to the dread of madness. It was written while on his journey, soon after his pilgrimage to the birth-place of Burns,—not for the gaze of the world, but as a record of the temper of his mind at the time. It is a sure index to the more serious traits in his character; but Keats, neither in writing nor speaking, could *affect* a sentiment; his gentle spirit knew not how to counterfeit.

There is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain,
 Where patriot battle has been fought, where glory had the gain;
 There is a pleasure on the heath, where Druids old have been,
 Where mantles grey have rustled by, and swept the nettles green;
 There is a joy in every spot, made known in days of old,
 New to the foot, altho' each tale a hundred times be told. . . .
 And if a madman could have leave to pass a healthful day,
 To tell his forehead's swoon and faint when first began decay. . . .
 One hour, half idiot he stands, by mossy waterfall,
 But in the very next, he reads his soul's memorial;
 He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance he may
 sit down,
 Upon rough marble diadem, that hill's eternal crown.
 Yet be his anchor e'er so fast, room is there none for prayer,
 That man may never lose his mind on mountains bleak and
 bare;
 That he may stray, league after league, some great birth-place
 to find,
 And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight unblind.

There exists in aquarella a miniature, of which I have
 a copy through the kindness of the lady who knew so

well to appreciate his heart and genius, that may be remembered by some of his admirers, for it appeared in the exhibition of the year at Somerset-house. He has been taken at a moment of inspiration; a more complete idealism of a poet was never struck out by the fire of genius. His eyes are "in a fine frenzy rolling." One hand is leaning forward over a book—probably that book which was the choice companion of his journey to Italy, Shakspeare's *Minor Poems*,¹—whilst the other, half closed, serves as a support to his upcast countenance. The features are finely moulded, but death is written in his pale and almost haggard features, whilst the spirit seems to defy the decay of the body, and which we see is inevitable. This miniature, if not painted for, is in the possession of the above lady; would that we had something of the same kind of Shelley! As a likeness it was perfect, and as a work of art, a gem. It is by the hand of that distinguished artist, Mr. Severn.

"It was about this time," continues my kind correspondent, "that I became acquainted with Keats. We met frequently at the house of a mutual friend, (not Leigh Hunt's,) but neither then nor afterwards did I see anything in his manner to give the idea that he was brooding over any secret grief or disappointment. His conversation was in the highest degree interesting, and his spirits good, excepting at moments when anxiety regarding his brother's health dejected them. His own illness, that commenced in January 1820, began from inflammation in the lungs, from cold. In coughing, he ruptured a blood-vessel. An hereditary tendency to consumption was aggravated by the excessive susceptibility of his temperament, for I never see those often quoted lines of Dryden, without thinking how exactly they applied to Keats:—

The fiery soul, that working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay.

¹ It is certainly not the octavo *Poems*, but a much larger volume, which, lying open, spreads right across the bottom of the picture—

of course the folio *Plays*. Both books are in the Hampstead public library as part of the Dilke bequest.

From the commencement of his malady, he was forbidden to write a line of poetry, and his failing health, joined to the uncertainty of his prospects, often threw him into deep melancholy.

"The letter, p. 295 of Shelley's Remains, from Mr. Finch, seems to be calculated to give a very false idea of Keats. That his sensibility was most acute, is true, and his passions were very strong, but not violent, if by that term, violence of temper is implied. His was no doubt susceptible, but his anger seemed rather to turn on himself than on others, and in moments of greatest irritation, it was only by a sort of savage despondency that he sometimes grieved and wounded his friends. Violence such as the letter describes, was quite foreign to his nature. For more than a twelvemonth before quitting England, I saw him every day, often witnessed his sufferings, both mental and bodily, and I do not hesitate to say, that he never could have addressed an unkind expression, much less a violent one, to any human being. During the last few months before leaving his native country, his mind underwent a fierce conflict; for whatever in moments of grief or disappointment he might say or think, his most ardent desire was to live to redeem his name from the obloquy cast upon it;* nor was it till he knew his death inevitable, that he eagerly wished to die. Mr. Finch's letter goes on to say,—'Keats might be judged insane,'—I believe the fever that consumed him, might have brought on a temporary species of delirium, that made his friend Mr. Severn's task a painful one."

This gentleman, who Shelley says "almost risked his life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance on his dying friend;"—and of whom he augurs the

* A strong confirmation of this ardent desire of Keats's, to leave behind him a name, is to be found in the two exquisite Odes, *To the Nightingale*, and *On Psyche*.

O for a draught of vintage, that has been
Cooled a long time in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance and Provençal song and sun-burnt mirth!

and in the latter of these Odes,—

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
In some untrodden region of the mind,

future career in the creations of his pencil,—an augury that has been fully verified,—had early in the autumn of 1820, embarked with Keats on board a trading vessel for Naples, I imagine at the beginning of September, for Leigh Hunt, in *The Indicator*,¹ makes him the following adieu:—

“ Ah! dear friend, as valued a one as thou art a poet, John Keats, we cannot, after all, find in our hearts to be glad now thou art gone away with the swallows to a kindlier climate. The rains began to fall heavily the moment thou wast to go—we do not say, poetlike, for

Where branched thoughts new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines, shall murmur in the wind;
 Far, far above shall those dark-clustered trees
 Hedge the wild ridged mountains, steep by steep,
 And there by zephyrs, streams and birds and bees,
 The moss-laid Druids shall be lulled to sleep;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness,
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress,
 With the wreathed trellis of a working brain,
 With buds and bells and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same;
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm love in.

It is plain that Italy was in his thoughts when he was thus inspired, and indeed he had then projected a visit to that country—sometimes buoyed up with the hope beyond hope of recovering his health, but more of re-establishing his fame.

¹ The extract from *The Indicator* for September 20, 1820 is perhaps a little less inaccurate than usual with Medwin; but it is bad enough to exasperate those to whom the friendship of Hunt for Keats is a cherished recollection. In line 2 of the paragraph we should read *find it in* for *find in*; in line 3 *clime* for *climate*; in line 5 *thy* for *the*; in line 6 *metaphorical* for *metaphysical*; in line 8 *thee* for *you*; in line 11

over-working for *ever-working*; and in line 12 *that* for *which*. As to changes of punctuation,—*non ragionam di lor*; but observe the mess made of the Nightingale and Psyche lines; and read (Nightingale) *hath* for *has* and *age* for *time*, and (Psyche) in line 2 *my mind* for *the mind*; in line 5 *around* for *above*; in line 6 *Fledge* for *Hedge*; and in line 8 *moss-lain Dryads* for the blood-curdling *moss-laid Druids* of Medwin's foot-note.

thy departure. One tear, in an honest eye, is more precious to the sight than all the metaphysical weepings in the universe, and thou didst leave many starting, to think how many months it would be till they saw you again. And yet thou didst love metaphorical tears too, in their way, and couldst always liken everything in nature to something great or small. And the rains that beat against thy cabin window will set, we fear, thy ever-working wits upon many comparisons, which ought to be much more painful to others than thyself. Heaven mend their envious and ignorant numskulls! But thou hast a mighty soul in a little body, and the kind cares of the former, for all about thee, shall no longer subject the latter to the chance of impressions which it scorns, and the soft skies of Italy shall breathe balm upon it, and thou shalt return with thy friend the nightingale, and make all thy other friends as happy with thy voice, as they are sorrowful to miss it. The little cage thou didst sometimes share with us, looks as deficient without thee as thy present one may do without us. But farewell for a while! Thy heart is in our fields, and thou wilt soon be back to rejoin it."

Alas! these aspirations were vain. But how unwillingly, even against hope, do we cease to hope! His artist friend and himself, made a very unpropitious voyage,—it was full of mishaps. At the very commencement of it, they were obliged by stress of weather, to put into a port on the coast of Hampshire, and disembark. They met with a violent storm on the passage, and it is a miracle that Keats, in his state, did not die on board. Keats says in a letter, also communicated to me by the same lady,—the only letter, I believe, which he sent from Italy, a day or two after reaching Naples, penned apparently on board.—"It has been unfortunate for me that one of the passengers is a young lady in a consumption. Her imprudence has vexed me very much. The knowledge of her complaint—the flushings in her face, all her bad symptoms have preyed upon me. They would have done so, had I been in good health. I shall feel a load off me, when she vanishes out

of my sight." Keats's symptoms seem to have been very much aggravated by this ill-judged voyage. He appears to have reached Naples on the 24th October, prostrated in mind and body. His stay there was short, and his journey to Rome attended by great inconvenience; for one whole day they were without food, a severe privation to one so debilitated. I imagine this to have occurred on the crossing the Pontine Marshes, from Mola de Gaetà to Cisterna. Indeed, this journey, combined with the voyage, would have tried the constitution of one in health, but was fatal to an invalid.

He arrived in Rome half dead, and I am enabled to give extracts of letters written by a mutual friend¹ of Keats and the lady to whom I am so much indebted, to her mother, that paint the last illness and suffering of the poor poet with a faithful pencil.

"Rome, Feb. 21st.

MY DEAR MRS. [BRAWNE,]

I have just got your letter of the 15th,—the contrast of your quiet, friendly home, with this lonely place, and our poor suffering Keats, brings the tears into my eyes. I wish many times that he had never left you. His recovery must have been impossible, before he left England, and his excessive grief would, in any case, have made it so. In your case, he seems to me like an infant in its mother's arms. You would have soothed his pains, and his death might have been eased by the presence of his many friends; but here, with one solitary friend, in a place savage for an invalid, he has had another pang added to the many.

"I have had the hardest task. I have kept him alive week after week. He had refused all food, but I tried him every way—left him no excuse. Many times I have prepared his meals six times over, and kept from him the trouble I have had in so doing. I have not been able to leave him—that is, I dared not do so, except when he slept. Had he come here alone, he would have sunk into the grave in silence, and we should not have known one syllable about him. This reflection repays me for what I have done. . . .

¹ Joseph Severn.

"It is impossible to conceive what the sufferings of this poor fellow have been. Now he lies still and calm—if I say *now*, I shall say too much. At times I have even hopes that he will recover, but the doctor shakes his head, and Keats will not hear that he is better. The thought of recovery is beyond anything dreadful to him. We dare not now perceive any improvement in his health, for the hope of death seems to be his only comfort. He talks of the quiet grave, as the first rest he will ever have had. . . .

"In the last week a great desire for books came over his mind. I got him all those at hand, and for three days the charm lasted; but now it is gone; yet he is very calm, and more and more reconciled to his misfortunes. . . .

"Little or no change has taken place in Keats since the commencement of this letter, except that his mind is growing to greater quietness and peace. This has its rise from the increasing weakness of his body; but it seems like a delightful sleep to me, who have been beating about in the tempest of his mind so long. To-night he has talked very much to me, but so easily that he at last fell into a pleasant sleep. Among the many things he has to-night requested, this is the principal, that on his grave should be inscribed,—

Here lies one whose name was writ in water.

.

"*Such* a letter has come—I gave it to Keats, supposing it to be one of yours—but it proved sadly otherwise. The glances of that letter tore him to pieces. The effects were on him for many days. He did not read it—he could not; but requested me to place it in the coffin, with a purse and a letter (unopened) of his sister. . . .

"The doctor has been here. He thinks Keats worse. He says the expectoration is the most dreadful he ever saw—He never met with an instance where the patient was so quickly pulled down. Keats's inward grief must have been beyond all limits. He says he was fretted to death. From the first drops of blood, he knew he must die. No common chance of living was for him,—. . ."

A few days after these melancholy and interesting details were penned, Keats breathed his last—slept sweetly "as a tired child." His dying moments were as tranquil as those of a child; he was resigned, more than resigned to die,—he had longed ardently for death, and hailed it as his best friend—had hunted for it more than

for hidden treasures. Almost his last words were,—“I feel the daisies growing over me—Shelley calls them ‘the stars that never set.’”¹ He had, on hearing of Keats’s intention of proceeding to Italy, made him an offer through Leigh Hunt, of a home with him in Pisa; but Keats, with his love of independence, and knowledge of the trouble and anxiety which his state of health, bodily and mental, would cause, although he gratefully acknowledged, declined the invitation; nor was Shelley aware, on my going to Rome in February, that Keats was so near his end. I was the bearer, from Shelley, of a large packet of letters or MSS. for his poet-friend, and which, ignorant of his death, that took place a few days after my arrival, on the 23d February,—not on the 27th of December, as erroneously stated in the Preface to *Adonais*—(the date of Mr. Gibson’s² letter must have been 13th June, not January, 1821,) I sent to his address. In the whirl and confusion consequent on a first sight of Rome, I did not, for some time, make inquiries about Keats,—and none of whom I did enquire, could give me any information respecting him; having no clue to any friend of his. Great cities are indeed great solitudes, and that this “child of grace and genius,” “the brave, gentle, and the beautiful,” should have fled like some “frail exhalation,” and the heartless world should have neither known nor cared for his fate and sufferings, nor shed a tear over his remains, is but a sad and true comment on the words of his friend,—“*This is a lonely place.*” It was some time, also, before Shelley was acquainted with his death, for in his letters to me at Rome, he does not make

¹ This looks like a clumsy sentimental fabrication of Medwin’s to get the two poets’ names together again.

² The allusion is of course to Gisborne’s letter enclosing “the Rev. Col. Finch’s” account of Keats’s death.

any allusion to the subject. It has been stated to me by the lady already mentioned, that his papers (those, doubtless, of which I was the bearer among the number) fell into the hands of Mr. Browne [*sic*], who had intended to write his memoirs, and who unhappily died in New Zealand, whither he had gone to settle, before his task was completed. It is a mystery to me, why Mr. Browne, or Brown (I am not certain how spelt,) ¹ a gentleman little famed in the world of letters, should have been selected as Keats's biographer, instead of Leigh Hunt, or John Hamilton Reynolds, better known by the assumed name of Hamilton, under which he published a volume, entitled, *The Garden of Florence*, and other poems of great merit, in 1821, and promised at one time a second, in conjunction with Keats, of whom he says,—“He who is gone, was one of the kindest friends I ever possessed, and yet he was not kinder, perhaps to me, than to others. His intense mind and powerful feeling would, I truly believe, have done the world some service, had his life been spared. He was of too sensitive a nature, and thus he was destroyed.” ²

Either of these would have been the most appropriate chronicler,—the last was his oldest and most intimate friend, and he was attracted to the first, like Byron, by sympathy for his unjust imprisonment, and a similarity of opinion on politics,—for Keats's were most liberal, and

¹ Charles Armitage Brown's name was spelt without the *e*. Curiously enough, after his father's death, his mother married a Mr. Browne with the *e*.

² The Keats-Reynolds scheme was to write and publish a collection of poetical tales from Boccaccio. Medwin's extract is given without immoderate inaccuracy from the

Preface of Reynolds's little book, which does not mention Keats by name, but leaves no doubt that *Isabella* was to have been associated with *The Garden of Florence* and Reynolds's other poem from Boccaccio, *The Lady of Provence*, which was also in his 1821 volume. There was no promise of a second volume.

not merely confined to words, but actually shown,—a record of which would not be devoid of interest.

Among Keats's MSS. was a tragedy, entitled *Otho the Great*, a subject inspired by the pages of Tacitus, and on which it appears Shelley had formed an idea of writing a poem, of which Mrs. Shelley has given us two stanzas. The master-passion of Keats's drama was jealousy. It was offered to Drury Lane or Covent Garden, and rejected; but that rejection is no proof of its demerits, for after the review of his *Endymion* in *The Quarterly*, it is not likely, had it been a masterpiece, that it would have been accepted; and following the example of Mr. Griffiths' play, which was brought out twenty years after its rejection, Keats's may yet make its appearance.¹

Keats was an ardent admirer of Shakspeare,—and after the manner of Sheridan Knowles, adopted the phraseology of the old masters. In the folio Shakspeare² before me, the lines he most admired in *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, (the last two plays doubtless studied with a view to his own,) are marked and underlined; to the latter he has appended several notes, and suggested some emendations in the text. In the passage,—

Sith every action that has gone before,
Whereof we have record, trial did draw,
Bias and thwart, not answering the aim,
And that unbodied figure of the thought
That gav't surmised shape,—

¹ The tragedy of *Otho the Great*, of which the plot of four acts was supplied by Charles Armitage Brown and the fifth by Keats, who wrote the whole play, was accepted at Drury Lane, to be produced in 1820, and there were also negotiations with Covent Garden. The question was—When shall it come out? It

cannot properly be said that it was rejected by either theatre; but the parallel with the case of Mr. Griffiths has not been fulfilled. *Otho* remains an unacted play, though published among Keats's works.

² Presumably borrowed. See *ante*, page 294.

he has affixed the following note:—

“The genius of Shakspeare was an innate universality,—wherefore he laid the achievement of human intellect prostrate beneath his indolent and kingly gaze. He could do easily man’s utmost—his plan of tasks to come was not of this world. If what he proposed to do hereafter would not, in the idea, answer the aim, how tremendous must have been his conception of ultimates!”

This commentary may serve to shew what was working in Keats’s mind—the distrust of himself—almost despair, at the comparison of his own labours with the unpremeditated effusions of Shakspeare.

The same interesting volume contains in the blank leaves two poems,—a sonnet, *On Sitting Down to read King Lear once again*; and *Lines on seeing a lock of Milton’s Hair*; which, though not contained in his published volumes, have, I believe, been given to the world in periodicals.¹

A comic poem was also in Mr. Browne’s [*sic*] possession, of Keats’s, written in the Spenser metre, of which a few stanzas appeared in *The Indicator* of August 23rd, 1820, under the pseudo name of Lucy V. L.² This poem

¹ I have not yet been able to verify this belief; but it may be well founded.

² Lucy Vaughan Lloyd was the name in full, and *The Cap and Bells* the title of the poem, now long included in Keats’s published works. The supposed poetess did not execute what can fairly be called a parody on Byron’s *Farewell*. The nearest thing to such a parody is in stanza 68, where it is said of the Emperor Elfinan that

He bow’d at Bellanaine, and said
—‘Poor Bell!
Farewell! farewell! and if for
ever! still
For ever fare thee well!’—and
then he fell

A laughing!—snapp’d his fingers!
—Shame it is to tell!

No doubt Keats took Byron’s words and Lady Byron’s name and put them in this context in token of his disgust with his great contemporary’s mental tone when treating serious matters. A dying man circumstanced as Keats was could hardly be expected to enjoy the shipwreck episode in *Don Juan*, and might be forgiven for throwing the book down in disgust when he got to the couplet—

At last they caught two boobies and
a noddy
And then they left off eating the
dead body.

Byron’s plea in mitigation of sen-

contained also a parody on Byron's farewell, and my informant says, possessed a vein of dry wit and much humour, of which my readers may judge from the specimen to which I refer them. The paper is headed "Coaches."

The editor of *The Athenæum* has drawn a parallel between Shelley and Keats,—a parallel that reminds me of what Göthe says of the controversy between the Germans, respecting the comparative merits of himself and Schiller; and on which he remarks,—“They may think themselves lucky dogs in having two such fellows to dispute about.” Mr. D[ilke] says,¹

“Shelley was a worshipper of truth, Keats of beauty; Shelley had the greater power, Keats the finer imagination,—both were single-hearted, admirable men. When we look into the world—nay, not to judge others, when we look into our own breasts, we should despair, if such men did not occasionally appear among us. Shelley and Keats were equal enthusiasts, had the same hope of the moral improvement of society, and the ultimate triumph of truth; and Shelley, who lived longest, carried all the generous feelings of youth into manhood. Age enlarged, not narrowed his sympathies, and learning bowed down his humanity to feel its brotherhood with the humblest of its fellow-creatures. If not judged by creeds and conventional opinions, Shelley must be considered a moral teacher, both by precept and example; he scattered the seed of truth, so it appeared to him, everywhere, and upon all occasions,—confident, that however disregarded, however long it might be buried, it would not perish, but spring up hereafter in the sunshine of its welcome, and its golden fruitage be garnered by grateful men. Keats had naturally much less of this political philosophy, but he had neither less resolution, less hope of, or less good will towards man. Lord Byron's opinion, that he was killed by the reviewers, is wholly ridiculous, though his epitaph and the angry feelings of his friends might countenance it. Keats died of hereditary consumption.”

tence still satisfies folk whose stomachs are robust—to wit, that he paints “your world exactly as it goes.”

¹ This is a part of a note appended by Dilke to a passage in Medwin's memoir as it appeared in *The Athenæum*.

The editor adds, that "he was fast sinking before either *Blackwood* or *The Quarterly* poured out their malignant venom." There he was mistaken, and misinformed, as I have already proved, for he was only first attacked with that deadly malady, eighteen months after the appearance of the articles.

Agreeing with Mr. D[ilke] in the main, though not admitting that Keats had the finer imagination, I will state what Shelley's opinions were of his poetry. Those he entertained respecting *Endymion*, are already before the public. He often lamented that, under the adoption of false canons of taste, he spoiled by their affectation his finest passages. But in the volume that Keats published in 1820, he perceived in every one of these productions a marked and continually progressing improvement, and hailed with delight his release from his leading-strings, his emancipation from what he called "a perverse and limited school." *The Pot of Basil*, and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, he read and re-read with ever new delight, and looked upon *Hyperion* as almost faultless, grieving that it was but a fragment, and that Keats had not been encouraged to complete a work worthy of Milton. He used to say that "the scenery and drawing of his Saturn Dethroned, and the fallen Titans, surpassed those of Satan and his rebellious angels in the *Paradise Lost*,—possessing more human interest; that the whole poem was supported throughout with a colossal grandeur equal to the subject." Shelley had this little volume continually in his pocket, the best proof of his appreciation of its merits. Nothing more deeply affected Shelley than the premature removal from a world, that deserved to lose him, of Keats. Shelley thought that he died too soon for his fame, great as it is; had he lived to bask in the warm south, to drink deep of

the warm south, to draw his inspiration from purer sources; had he not been flattered and stimulated into writing from false models, turned as he was daily become more and more from the error of his ways, what might he not have produced? The prohibition of his physicians, to write after his first attack, was cruelly felt by Keats. Poetry had been his "safety valve." His imagination now preyed on itself—he longed to redeem his fame. Not that, as *some* accused him, he had been idle, and when we consider that he had only begun to write in 1815 or to publish till 1817, (he was little more than 24 when he died)¹ one wonders that so few years should have effected so much. His earliest productions—though they were so disfigured by an affected phraseology, that the one beginning, "I stood tiptoe upon a little hill," and several others, might be mistaken for his prototype's, if we compare them with those of Shelley at the same age, how far superior are they, how much greater promise do they not hold out of ultimate excellence! and his more finished ones make us say with Leigh Hunt,—“Undoubtedly he has taken his seat with the oldest and best of our poets.”

I shall complete this imperfect sketch of Keats with a brief notice of the elegy Shelley composed on his death in the autumn of that year, at the Baths of St. Julian. It breathes all the tenderness of Moschus and Bion; and speaking of *Adonais*, in a letter, he says, that had he received an account of the closing scene of the life of that great genius, he could not have composed it. The enthusiasm of the imagination overpowering the sentiment. Not the least valuable part of that idyll is the picture Shelley has drawn of himself among the mourners

¹ He was in his twenty-sixth year.

at the funeral,—where he has not forgotten Byron and Moore.

'Mid others of less note, came one frail form,
A phantom among men, companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray,
With naked steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts along that rugged way
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

A pard-like spirit, beautiful and swift!
A love in desolation masked. A power
Girt round with weakness: it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour.
It is a dying lamp—a falling shower—
A breaking billow!—even while we speak,
Is it not broken? On the withering flower,
The killing sun smiles brightly; on a cheek
The life¹ can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white and pied and blue,
And a light spear topped with a cypress-cone,
(Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew,
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew)
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart—
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart!

How pathetic is the close—how it hangs upon the ear like some passage in one of Beethoven's Sonatas, or a "Melodious Tear" of Bellini! What is the whole poem but a prophecy of his early fate—an augury of his soon rejoining his friend.

¹ Medwin has *lip* for *life*—probably a printer's error; but the next misquotation is clearly his—*the many pass away for the many*

change and pass—where the rhyme alone should have kept him on the rails.

In *Adonais*, as much as in any of his works, he has developed his Platonism, his metaphysical ideas of intellectual beauty. How sublime is—

The one remains—the many pass away¹—
Heaven's light for ever shines, earth's shadows fly—
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments.

And yet, speaking of *Adonais*,* a contemporary critic, no more capable of appreciating it than a penny-a-liner or Grub-street poet, or than an English audience the unutterable tenderness and beauty of the Shakespeare of German Composers, Beethoven, says,

"We have always given room in our columns to this writer's (Shelley's) merit, and we will not now repeat our conviction of his incurable absurdity. *Adonais, an Elegy*, is the form in which Mr. Shelley puts forth his woes. We give a verse at random, premising that there is *no story in the elegy!* and that it contains fifty-five stanzas, which are, to our seeming, altogether *unconnected*, incoherent, and nonsensical! The poetry of the work is contemptible—a mere collection of bloated words, heaped on each other without order, harmony, or meaning, the refuse of a schoolboy's common-place book, full of the vagaries of pastoral poetry—'yellow gems, and blue stars, bright Phœbus, and rosy-fingered Aurora;' and of such stuff is Keats's elegy composed."

Oh, Shame! where is thy blush? †

On quitting Shelley, I left him with less regret, from thinking that in introducing him to the Williams's, they would form the charm of his solitary life, and it is a satisfaction to me to think that I conferred a mutual benefit on both. Williams and myself had hunted the tiger in another hemisphere, had been constant correspondents in India, and on my return home took a

* See *Literary Gazette*.

† No book can be totally bad which finds one even one reader who can say as much sincerely.—LORD BYRON.

¹ See note on previous page.

campagne together at Geneva, and revived a friendship such as I have never felt for any other individual. A more noble, unworldly being never existed than Williams. He had been educated at Eton, was originally in the navy, and afterwards entered the 8th Dragoons, and unlike most officers, had highly cultivated his mind, and possessed considerable dramatic talent, and a deep insight into the workings of human nature. During the spring he had written a play, taken from the interweaving of two stories in Boccaccio, and Shelley had assisted him in the work, and supplied him with an epithalamium for music, since incorrectly published, and which I give in its original form.

Epithalamium.

Night, with all thine eyes look down!
 Darkness shed its holiest dew!
 When ever smiled the inconstant moon
 On a pair so true?
 Hence, coy hour! and quench thy light,
 Lest eyes see their own delight!
 Hence, swift hour! and thy loved flight
 Oft renew.

Boys.

Oh joy! oh fear! what may be done
 In the absence of the sun?
Come along!

The golden gates of sleep unbar!
 When strength and beauty meet together,
 Kindles their image like a star
 In a sea of glassy weather.
 Hence, coy hour! and quench thy light,
 Let [*sic* for *Lest*] eyes see their own delight!
 Hence, swift hour! and thy loved flight
 Oft renew.

Girls.

Oh joy! oh fear! what may be done
 In the absence of the sun?
Come along

Fairies! sprites! and angels keep her!
 Holiest powers, permit no wrong!
 And return, to wake the sleeper,
 Dawn, ere it be long.
 Hence, swift hour! and quench thy light,
 Lest eyes see their own delight!
 Hence, coy hour! and thy loved flight
 Oft renew.

Boys and Girls.

Oh joy! oh fear! what will be done
 In the absence of the sun?

Come along!

Williams (who was, by the way, a lineal descendant from one of Cromwell's daughters) had, with his moderate wishes, what might be considered a sufficiency, but unhappily, a great part of his fortune was swallowed up in the bankruptcy of a house in Calcutta, where it was lodged. Another misfortune attended him, soon after taking up his abode in Pisa; he was seized with a pulmonary complaint, which he attributed to sleeping in a bed where a consumptive patient had died. The Italians, and still more the Spanish, consider the atmosphere of rooms to be infected by such patients, and the laws (though the regulations of the police are sometimes infringed, which did not occur in Keats's case) strictly enjoin that all the furniture in the apartments of those who have died of the complaint, is to be destroyed. Williams certainly when he came to Pisa never showed any symptoms of phthisis, which soon took deep root in his constitution, and as appears by a letter of Shelley's, where he says, "Williams must go on with the *Doccia*," excited great alarm in Shelley, who soon learnt to love him with the tenderest regard. Pisa was full of victims to this insidious disease, and I have often observed Shelley in our walks made deeply melancholy

by the sight of a lovely and interesting girl, crawling along—

A dying lady, lean and pale,
Tottering forth,

and basking in the sun, like a half-animated butterfly escaped untimely from its shell, whose wings had no power to raise it,—those beautiful wings flapping impotently in the dust. Williams also (as Keats had been on board of the ship,) was deeply affected by the spectacle. He had also a great taste for drawing; his sketches were spirited and masterly; he could illustrate happily from the ideas of others, and took likenesses in general very striking, and it is to him that we are indebted for the only semblance of Shelley that exists. It was not a very happy miniature, but I should conceive no one so difficult to pourtray, the expression of his countenance being ever flitting and varied,—now depressed and melancholy, now lit up like that of a spirit,—making him look one moment forty and the next eighteen. It is said that Mr. Severn has made a portrait of Shelley from memory, as Count d'Orsay had done of Byron; but I have never seen the former, hoping it may be as valuable as the accomplished foreigner's. Williams's sketch¹ has been, it strikes me, greatly altered for the worse in the engraving; the face is too full and oval, the nose too straight and

¹ Williams's sketch had not at that time been engraved or otherwise reproduced at all. The engravings then publicly known were based on Miss Curran's portrait in oils. There was one (by Wedgwood) in Galignani's edition of *The Poetical Works of Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats* (Paris, 1829); one by William Finden in the *Landscape and Portrait Illustrations to the Life and Works of Lord Byron* (1834); and a smaller and inferior one by the same engraver

in Mrs. Shelley's editions of her husband's collected works. It is probably of the last named that Medwin speaks. There was sufficient resemblance between the two portraits in regard to the position and aspect of the face to enable Clint to use both in the posthumous portrait he made for Jane Williams (also not reproduced when Medwin published his *Life*).

regular,—the whole wanting in that fire which in moments of inspiration animated him. But to have arrested the smallest shadow of resemblance of that great genius is something.

The mutual delicacy of health of Shelley and Williams drew them closer to each other, and the similarity of their traits and pursuits served to rivet still more the tie of friendship. Williams soon learned to understand Shelley—to appreciate him as a poet and a man—and Shelley found in him one who could sympathise with his sufferings, and to whom he could lay open his heart. Mrs. Shelley, speaking of Williams, says, “that he was her husband’s favourite companion, that his love of adventure and manly exercise also corresponded with Shelley’s taste.” She calls him in another place, “the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures,—and alas! his fate.”

These manly exercises, to which she alludes, were practice with a pistol, and boating. Williams, from his early sea-life, was an excellent sailor, and knew all the mysteries of the craft, could cut out sails, make blocks, &c. The Arno has no pleasure-boats, and its shallowness rendered it difficult to get any that drew little water enough to float. They, however, overcame the difficulty, and constructed one, such as the huntsmen carry about with them in the Maremma, something like a Welch coracle; and in this they ventured down to Leghorn, returning to Pisa by the canal, when missing the direct cut, they got entangled among the weeds, and upset. This boat was a great amusement to them during their *villagiatura* [*sic*] this summer (1821). Shelley fixed himself again at the baths of St. Julian, and Williams at Pugnano, four miles distant. I have heard Shelley often speak with rapture of the excursions they made together. The canal

fed by the Serchio, of the clearest water, is so rapid, that they were obliged to tow the boat up against the current; but the swift descent, through green banks enamelled with flowers and overhung with trees, that mirrored themselves on its glassy surface, gave him a wonderful delight. He has left a record of these trips in a poem entitled *The Boat on the Serchio*, and calls Williams and himself Melchior and Lionel.

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,
 The living breath is fresh behind,
 As with dews and sunrise fed,
 Comes the laughing morning wind.
 The sails are full, the boat makes head
 Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,
 Then flags with intermitting course,
 And hangs upon the wave,¹
 Which fervid from its mountain source,
 Shallow, smooth, and strong doth come;
 Swift as fire, tempestuously
 It sweeps into the affrighted sea.
 In morning's smile its eddies coil,
 Its billows sparkle, toss, and boil,
 Torturing all its quiet light
 Into columns pure and bright.

A boat was to Shelley, what a plaything is to a child. I have mentioned that he early acquired the taste when a boy, his father having one at Warnham pond, a lake of considerable extent, or rather two connected by a draw-bridge, which led to a pleasure-garden and boat-house. He was nineteen when he used to float paper flotillas at Oxford,—older when he made a sail of a ten-pound note on the Serpentine, and I have no doubt would, with any

¹ Medwin omits a few words here.
 The fragment reads
 And hangs upon the wave, and
 stems

The tempest of the . . .

In the last line of his extract *pure*
 should, as far as we know, be *fierce*.

boy, at twenty-eight, have done the same. The water was his fatal element. He crossed the Channel to Calais in an open boat, a rash experiment; when at school, the greatest pleasure he enjoyed was an excursion we made to Richmond from Brentford—a pleasure perhaps the more sweet, being a stolen one. He was a great sculler at Eton. He descended the Rhine on a sort of raft. He made a voyage in a wherry from Windsor to Cricklade; was nearly lost in coming from the Isle of Man; at Geneva, past days and nights on the lake: and now, reader, excuse this recapitulation, though imperfect,—behold him on the Serchio.

If there was anything in *Thalaba* that delighted him above the rest, it was the fairy boat that figures in that interesting tale. Shelley made a chaloupe enter into the scenery of most of his poems, from *Queen Mab* down to *The Witch of Atlas*. More beautiful passages cannot be found in any writer than those in which he treats of this subject. In *Alastor*, the boat is “a thing of life,” is part of the man, and we take a lively interest in its dangers.

A little shallop floating near the shore,
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.
It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark,
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste,
For well he knew that mighty shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

* * * A whirlwind swept it on
With fierce gusts, and precipitating force,
Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.
The waves arose,—higher and higher still
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge,
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp. . . .
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave.

And we breathe again when we come to—"safely fled."

The Revolt of Islam owes much of its charm to the boat of pearl in which Laon and Cythna made their voyage, and it forms one of the charms of the *Epipsychidion*.

Alas! the subject is not yet exhausted.

This his second summer at the baths of St. Julian was perhaps one of the happiest Shelley ever spent abroad. The charm of Mrs. Williams's society, and of their children (they had two), served also to heighten its agreeableness. She was an accomplished and elegant woman, not only a superior player on the harp and guitar, but had a sweet and cultivated voice. Shelley was particularly fond of music, and delighted in her simple airs, some of which she had brought with her, in memory, from the East. For her were composed the exquisite lines, "I arise from dreams of thee,"¹ adapted to the celebrated Persian air sung by the Knautch girls, "*Tazee*

¹ *The Indian Serenade*, or as it is more often called *Lines to an Indian Air*, cannot conceivably have been composed for Jane, of whose existence Shelley had no knowledge till long after he had given a copy of the poem to Sophia Stacey (in 1819). In *The Athenæum* of the 2nd of November 1907, I gave an account of a holograph manuscript of Shelley's in which the poem is associated with the words of Metastasio's "Ah perdona" in the opera *La Clemenza di Tito*. This and other circumstances duly set forth in *The Athenæum* led me to the conviction that, if that delicately passionate gem is to be associated with any particular person and melody, the person must henceforth be Sophia Stacey and the tune the main melodic trend of Mozart's "Ah perdona." Being

old-fashioned enough still to believe that "divine Mozart" was the greatest melodist of whom "this world holds record," I was much — perhaps inordinately — pleased when I found that no one came forward to controvert this view of the genesis of the Serenade, and that the lady's only surviving son, Mr. Corbet Stacey Catty, with a good deal of personal knowledge to back his judgment, wrote to *The Athenæum* supporting my conclusion. That the song had not been forgotten in the reign of Jane may be concluded from its presence in the "Don Juan"—*si vera est fama*—when she foundered with the poet and his friend Williams. Of course Jane might easily have sung it to a less suitable and less exquisite melody than that of "Ah perdona."

be tazee no be no," and the Arietto which has been admirably set by an English composer,—

The keen stars are twinkling !
And the moon rising brightly among them,
Dear Jane !

and that gem of genius, entitled *With a Guitar*, the idea of which was probably derived from Homer or rather from Catullus; in the Introduction to which, the names of Miranda and Ferdinand were meant to typify that lady and her husband—himself Ariel. Many other of the lyrical pieces written about this time, such as *The Magnetic Lady to her Patient*, *The Invitation*, *The Recollection*, "When the Lamp is shattered,"—were addressed to Mrs. Williams.

The sympathy of these gifted persons contributed much to exorcise from Shelley the demon of despondency, that often lay on him like a nightmare; and in them he found a refuge and shelter from the world that never ceased to be his foe. The cold, censorious, formal, conventional world, often puts interpretations the most unworthy on the friendship between two persons of different sexes.

In *St. Irvyne*, written in 1811, he thus expresses himself—

"Let Epicureans argue and say—'There is no pleasure but in the gratification of the senses'—Let them enjoy their opinion—I want not *pleasure* but *happiness*. Let Stoics say, 'Every idea that there are fine feelings is weak—he who yields to them is weaker.' Let those too, wise in their own conceit indulge themselves in sordid and degrading hypothesis; and let them suppose human nature capable of no influence from any thing but Materiality so long as I enjoy innocent and *Congenial* delights, which it were needless to define to those who are strangers to it. . . . I am satisfied."

But a purer being than Mrs. Williams cannot exist. Not a breath of scandal could possibly attach to her fame.

The verses addressed to her always passed through the hands of Williams himself, and who had too much confidence in the virtue of one devotedly his, to harbour for a moment any jealousy of an attachment the most innocent and disinterested. Effusions such as these must not be interpreted literally. Should we allow ourselves to put wrong constructions on such outpourings of the soul, such Platonic aspirations, what are we to say for those of the L. E. L.s, and Lady Emmelines of the day? "By the intercourse with—the very touch of that which is beautiful, the poet brings forth and produces what he formerly conceived." We must look upon such compositions as possessing little or nothing of the actual—as (like the *Epipsychidion*) mere idealisms,—as "exercises on amatory matters," such as Diotima instructs Socrates to employ himself in, adding, that "Love, and everything else that desires anything, desires that which is absent, and beyond its reach,—that which it has not itself, that which it wants; such are things of which there are desire and love." These counsels, Shelley, whose handbook was Plato, constantly followed. As another specimen of this state of his mind, this yearning after a love that, alas! continued to elude his grasp, I might point out *The Zucca*, written at this very period, and—

I loved.—O no! I mean not one of ye!
 Or any earthly one; though ye are dear
 As human heart to human heart may be,
 I loved—I know not what—but this low sphere,
 And all that it contains, contains not thee!
 Thou whom seen nowhere, I feel everywhere,
 Dim object of my soul's idolatry.¹

¹ In this truncated octave stanza Medwin seems to have repunctuated the *Posthumous Poems* version and left out the incomplete eighth line

—"Veiled art thou like—": Mary Shelley in a later recension superseded the beautiful seventh line and printed another imperfect

And in *The Question*, where he dreams of having made a nosegay, he ends with—

I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it. Oh! to whom?

To these perhaps might be added—

I can give not what men call Love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above,
And the Heavens reject not,
The desire of the Moth for the Star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow.

In August, leaving Mrs. Shelley at the Baths, Shelley, at the request of Lord Byron, travelled to Ravenna, there to meet and consult with him on the critical posture of his affairs. He had, as Shelley says, “formed a permanent sort of *liaison* with the Countess Guiccioli,”—who with her father and brother, had made a hasty retreat from Romagna, and were then at Florence waiting for Lord Byron to join them. I say a hasty retreat, as applied to the fair countess; for her lord, the Count Guiccioli, had devised measures for shutting her up in a convent, and which she narrowly escaped. Lord Byron’s situation at Ravenna was also far from a pleasant one. A contributor to *The Westminster Review*, among num-

couplet with a stronger rhyme than the earlier drafting would have yielded. Nineteenth and twentieth century editors follow her, rightly, in reading thus—

From heaven and earth and all
that in them are
Veiled art thou like a star!
The beautiful
Dim object of my soul’s idolatry,

like many a still more treasurable line, was no doubt rejected by Shelley when he saw that his choice lay between a poor rhyme and a couplet with weak terminals—forming, in this case, something like a reverberation of *ye, be, and thee*. Hence this fine line is proper to the notes, in which alone it is now handed on from generation to generation.

erous other falsehoods, asserts that Lord Byron took no part in that abortive attempt at a revolution in the Papal territories. He says in his journal, "They mean to *insurrect* here, and are to honour me with a call thereupon. I shall not fall back;" and, "my life was not supposed to be particularly safe." Confirmations of his words to me, if indeed the stanzas inscribed "When about to join the Italian Carbonari" require confirmation, and he adds to the passage above quoted,—“Had it not been for the Pope’s minister, Cardinal Gonsalvo, perhaps the stiletto, had I not been openly assassinated, would have ended my days.” Many months after I had known him, in speaking of his love for Italy, and abhorrence of papal and Austrian despotism, he pointed to some saddle-bags lying on the floor of his room, and said, “There lies the firebrand. Those bags contain all the secrets of the conspiracy in Romagna. The names of—” there he stopped and turned the subject. His having these important documents in his possession, explains what Shelley says [*Essays*, &c., ii, 310].—“The interest he took in the politics of Italy, and *the actions he performed* in consequence of it, *are subjects not fit to be written.*”

That Lord Byron should have resorted to Shelley in his difficulties, who says,—“It is destined that I should have some active part in everybody’s affairs whom I approach,” shews great confidence in his judgment, and reliance on his advice. And strange to say, that ill-judging as he always was in his own affairs, no one in those of others was more to be relied on. After canvassing the comparative merits and demerits, (not to mention Switzerland,) of Geneva,¹ Lucca, Florence, Sienna, Prato, Pistoia

¹ This may be a misprint for appear to be mentioned in the *Genoa*, though that city does not discussion as reported by Shelley

and Pisa, the latter was eventually fixed on. So much did the Countess Guiccioli build on Shelley, and his influence with Lord Byron, founded on his often expressed appreciation of his worth, that she writes to him, "Signore.—La vostra bontà mi fa ardita di chiedervi un favore. Non lo accordate voi? Non partite da Ravenna senza milordo." "Of course," remarks Shelley, "being now by all the laws of knighthood, captive to a lady's request, I shall not be at liberty on my *parole*, until Lord Byron is settled at Pisa."

It would seem that Shelley's peace of mind at Ravenna was troubled by scandal and malevolence. He says, "Lord Byron told me of a circumstance that shocks me exceedingly, because it exhibits a degree of desperate and wicked malice, for which I am at a loss to account. When I hear such things, my patience and my philosophy are put to a severe proof, why refrain from seeking out some obscure hiding place, where the countenance of man may never meet me more?" Whatever this dark charge might have been, I know not; but one thing is clear, that Lord Byron disbelieved its truth, but what could the charge have been, for he says, speaking of Mrs. Shelley, "that it is the belief of persons who have known and seen you that you are guilty of crimes." ¹

to Mary in his letters from Ravenna, from which (*Essays* &c. 1840, ii, 319) Medwin got the transcript of the Countess Guiccioli's letter to Shelley: she, however, wrote *me lo accorderete voi* and *Milord*; and Shelley comments "I shall *only* be at liberty" &c. not "I shall *not* be at liberty."

¹ It is now well known what the calumny was. Byron does not come out of the affair very well. The Hoppners, with their minds poisoned, it is believed, by a dis-

missed servant of the Shelleys, told Byron that Clairmont had had a second child (by Shelley), which Shelley "tore from her" to consign it to the foundling hospital. Byron told Shelley he disbelieved the story; but Shelley and Mary agreed that the charge should be met by Mary, who was in a position to disprove it. She wrote fully to Mrs. Hoppner, demanding a retraction of the wicked slander that lady had been circulating; but no answer ever

It was with this foul calumny festering in his soul, that he goes on to say to Mrs. Shelley,—

“My great[est] content would be to desert all human society—I would retire with you and our child, to a solitary isle in the sea,—would build a boat, and shut upon my retreat the flood-gates of the world, I would read no reviews, and talk with no authors. If I dare trust my imagination, it would tell me, that there are one or two chosen companions beside yourself whom I should desire. The other side of the alternative, for a medium ought not to be adopted, is to form [for] ourselves a society of our own class, as much as possible in intellect or in feelings. Our roots never struck so deeply as at Pisa, and the transplanted tree flourishes not. The calumnies, the sources of which are deeper than we perceive, have ultimately for object the depriving us of the means of security and subsistence. You will easily perceive the gradations by which calumny proceeds to pretext, pretext to persecution, and persecution to the ban of fire and water. It is for this, and not because this or that fool, or the whole universe of fools, curse and rail, that calumny is worth repeating¹ or chastising.”

How appropriately might be inscribed on Shelley's tomb, the pathetic Italian epitaph so common,—“*Implora pace. Implora eterna quiete.*”

It was on his arrival at Pisa, where Mrs. Shelley had domiciled herself, that he first wrote to Leigh Hunt, with a proposal respecting the so-much-discussed *Liberal*.

reached Mary, for the very good reason (or very evil reason) that Byron, having undertaken to put the letter in Mrs. Hoppner's hands, took no steps for its delivery. It was found among his papers after his death. The best reason one can assign for such a base betrayal of trust is that Byron, in corresponding with Hoppner about Claire, had used this lie against the mother of his child Allegra, as if he knew it to be true, though he told Shelley he did not credit it, and accepted Mary's thanks for his disbelief. Medwin misunderstood the inaccurately quoted phrase “that it is the belief” &c. The *you* has no application to Mary at

all: it is used in a general sense like the French *on* or the German *man*. The sentence as printed by Mrs. Shelley in Shelley's letter to herself (*Essays* &c., 1840, ii, 306) is —“This is evidently the source of the violent denunciations of *The Literary Gazette*, in themselves contemptible enough, and only to be regarded as effects, which show us their cause, which until we put off our mortal nature, we never despise—that is the belief of persons who have known and seen you, that you are guilty of crimes.”

¹ In this, the very next quotation from Shelley's letter to Mary, the word *repeating* should of course be *refuting*.

"He (Byron) purposes," Shelley says, in a letter dated 26th of August, 1821, "that you should come and go shares with him and me in a periodical work, to be conducted here, in which each of the contracting parties shall publish all their original compositions, and share the profits. He proposed it to Moore, but for some reason he was never brought to bear." The reason, Mr. Moore gives, in the *Life of Byron*, as appears by the following extract from a letter to the noble poet.

"I heard some days ago that Leigh Hunt was on his way to you with his family, and the idea seems to be, that you and Shelley and he are to conspire together with *The Examiner*. I cannot believe this, and deprecate such a plan with all my might. I tremble even for you, with such a bankrupt Co. as * * * * * ;"

(the asterisks might be filled up with Shelley, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt.) He calls them "an unholy alliance;" and adds, "recollect, the many buildings about St. Peter's almost overtop it," an incorrect elucidation for its Dome stands far above the Vatican.

In another letter, Moore says,—"I could not become a partner in this miscellaneous *pot au feu*, where the bad flavour of one ingredient is sure to taint all the rest."

Shelley, to return to his letter, says,—

"Nothing should induce me to join in the profits. I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey, because there are men, however excellent, from whom we would never receive an obligation in the worldly sense of the word, and I am as jealous for my friend as myself; but I suppose I shall at last make an impudent face, and ask Horace Smith to add to the many obligations he has conferred on me. I know I need only ask."

Of Horace Smith I have often heard Shelley speak in terms of unqualified regard and attachment; indeed we have but to refer to his letters and lines addressed to Mrs. Gisborne, as a proof how much he esteemed his

friendship—shewn to Shelley on all occasions, in kind offices, not less than in the liberal assistance he never refused him in his pecuniary distresses and straits, brought about, not by his own extravagance, for no man was more economical in his domestic arrangements, or more moderate in his expences; but by his excessive generosity, a generosity to imprudence—a reckless expenditure of his income for others, as lamented by Mrs. Shelley in the strongest terms.

Shelley possessed the quality of conferring benefits with such delicacy, that those benefited could not feel the weight of the obligation; falsifying the proverb, that benefits are easier to forgive than injuries.

On the occasion of his friend Leigh Hunt's leaving England, he, as proposed in the letter quoted, did apply to Horace Smith, who not only advanced the passage money for his friend and his family, but a very considerable sum for the payment of his debts; as much, I think Shelley told me, as £1400. The passage money was unhappily forfeited, though I know not from what cause, and Leigh Hunt's friends, I have heard, raised a sufficient sum by a subscription to his poems, to enable him to execute his project; Shelley lamenting that he had not the means of making a second time the requisite advance for the voyage.

As to the controversy between Leigh Hunt and Lord Byron, that arose out of *The Liberal*, I shall not allude to it; and end this part of the subject by quoting a letter from Shelley, dated some months after.

Pisa, February 15th, 1822.

MY DEAR [LORD] BYRON,—

I inclose you a letter from Leigh Hunt, which annoys me on more than one account. You will observe the P.S., and you know me well enough to feel how painful the task is set me in commenting

upon it. *Hunt has [sic for had] urged me more than once to [ask you to] lend him this money.* My answer consisted in sending him all I could spare, which I have now literally done. Your kindness in fitting up a part of your rooms [*sic for own house*] for his accommodation, I sensibly feel [*sic for felt*], and willingly accepted from you on his part; but believe me, without the slightest intention of imposing, or, if I could help it, allowing to be imposed, any heavier task on your purse. As it has come to this, in spite of my exertions, I will not conceal from you the low ebb of my own money affairs, at [*sic for in*] the present moment; that is, my utter incapacity of assisting Hunt further.

I do not think poor Hunt's promise to pay in a given time is worth [very] much; but mine is less subject to uncertainty, and I should be happy to be responsible for any engagement he may have proposed to you. I am so much annoyed by this subject, that I hardly know what to write, and much less what to say; and I have need of all your indulgence in judging of both my feelings and expressions.

I shall see you by and by. Believe me,

Yours most faithfully and sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I quote this letter, not contained in the collection of Shelley's letters, published by Mrs. Shelley, in order to shew the extreme delicacy of feeling that reigns in it,—the active benevolence that overcame the repugnance with which he naturally sat down to pen such a letter. What must it not have cost him!¹

Change we the subject.

I reached Pisa for the second time in December. Lord Byron had already arrived, and was settled in the Casa Lanfranchi. Shelley had taken up his abode on the opposite side of the Lung' Arno. His apartment, however, looked to the west, and it was basking in the sun

¹ The mysterious source of the letter is Moore's *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*. In the sixth volume of the *Works* (1832) the text varies a good deal from Medwin's, but not, I should judge, of malice pre-pense. I have made a few amendments within hooks, so as to leave

it much as it appears in my edition of Shelley's *Prose Works* (1880, vol. iv, p. 257), which follows Moore, correcting his impossible year-date, 1823. Mr. Ingpen also gives the letter properly in his collection of Shelley's Letters.

when I entered ; and I may here add, that during almost all that winter, such is the divine climate of Pisa, we dined with the windows open. At his house, I first saw the Countess Guiccioli, then a strikingly handsome woman. Those who saw her at that time, might have supposed that she had sat to Georgione for a celebrated picture in the Dresden gallery—a gentleman with two ladies ; she bore such a striking resemblance to one of these, that on the left of the group ; possessing the same character of features, bright auburn hair and eyes, that seem indigenal to, or hereditary in the fair Venetians. For many weeks she passed her *soirees* [*sic*] at Shelley's ; a more perfectly amiable, interesting, and feminine person I never met. Her attachment to Byron, whose name she pronounced, laying a strong stress on the *y*, (and her voice was the most musical I ever remember in an Italian,) had been her first ; she loved him with a devotion of which no women are so capable as the Italians. I met her many years after, at the baths of Lucca, and at Florence, where at a ball given by the Prince Borghese, singularly enough, I, at the request of Mr. King, now Lord Lovelace, introduced her to him ; little thinking that he would afterwards have married the Ada of *Childe Harold*. But to revert to Shelley.

I found him an altered man ; his health had sensibly improved, and he had shaken off much of that melancholy and depression, to which he had been subject during the last year. He anticipated with delight the arrival of Leigh Hunt—was surrounded by many friends. The Williams's were a never failing resource to him, and his daily visit to Byron was a distraction, and ever new excitement. Nor this alone,—he accompanied him in his evening drives, assisted as wont in the pistol-practice, for

which he formed an early predilection at Oxford. A friend speaking of several contradictions in his appearance and character at that time, says, "His ordinary preparations for a rural walk formed a [very] remarkable contrast with his mild aspect and pacific habits. He provided himself with a pair of duelling pistols, and good store of powder and ball, and when he came to a solitary spot, he pinned a card, or fixed some other mark upon a tree or a bank, and amused himself by firing at it. He was a pretty good shot, and was much delighted at his success." The same gentleman says of himself, that having accidentally shot the target in the centre, "Shelley ran to the card, examined it attentively several times, and more than once measured the distance on the spot where I had stood."¹ How often have I seen him do the same! I imagine that it was Shelley, who at Geneva, inoculated Lord Byron (whose lameness made his out-door amusements very limited) with the taste. Göthe, I think erroneously, attributes Lord Byron's constant Pistol-shooting to the necessity of self-defence and the continual expectation of being called out.—Practising at a mark is of very little use as a preparation for an English Duel where no aim is taken. If Lord B[yrone] had had such an object in view he would have adopted a very different mode of exercise. All indeed who have tried the pastime become fond of it. These trials of skill were Shelley's favourite recreation, and even the preparations for it occupied his thoughts agreeably, for he generally made and carried to the ground a target to be used on the occasion, and habit enabled him to manufacture them with great neatness. I have often been surprised to see the

¹ These quotations, the last exceptionally inexact, are once more from Hogg,—hacked with Medwin's

blunt hatchet from page 141 of *The New Monthly Magazine* for February 1832.

poet occupied in making circles and bull's eyes. Shelley used to wonder that Byron shot so well, for his aim was long, and his hand trembled. Shelley's was all firmness. He was a very indifferent horseman—had an awkward and unsafe seat—which is very singular, as he had very early been used to ride, though it is probable that he had almost from boyhood discontinued the habit. Byron's seat was not the best in the world, nor his stud very famous. The animal who carried him was loaded with fat, and resembled, if she were not one, a Flanders mare. She was encumbered with a sliding martingale, a hussar saddle, and holsters with pistols; was remarkable for the lowness of her action, and the amble, her usual pace, which, from its ease, made her a favourite with her master.

Shelley and myself generally visited Byron at the same hour, between two and three; indeed, I believe there never passed a day, for many months, without our meeting at the Lanfranchi, and they had invented a sort of macaronic language that was very droll. They called firing, *tiring*; hitting, *colping*; missing, *mancating*; riding, *cavalling*; walking, *a-spasing*, &c.

Byron the man and Byron the poet were as different as mind and matter. He possessed two natures—the human and the divine. I have often heard Shelley, almost in the language of a gifted German lady-writer, say,—“The poet is a different being from the rest of the world. Imagination steals over him—he knows not whence. Images float before him—he knows not their home. Struggling and contending powers are engendered within him, which no outward impulse, no inward passion awakened. He utters sentiments he never meditated. He creates persons whose original he had never seen; but

he cannot command the power that called them out of nothing. He must wait till the God or dæmon genius breathes it into him. He has higher powers than the generality of men, and the most distinguished abilities; but he is possessed by a still higher power. He prescribes laws, he overturns customs and opinions, he begins and ends an epoch, like a God; but he is a blind, obedient, officiating priest in the temple of God." Byron also was fully indued with this persuasion, for he says,—“Poetry is a distinct faculty of the soul, and has no more to do with the every-day individual, than the inspirations of the Pythianess when removed from the tripod.” In his Essay on Poetry,¹ Shelley more fully developes this sentiment, and says,—“Poets are the hyerophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts on the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpet that sounds to battle, and feels not what it inspires; the influence which is moved, but moves not. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world!” And again,—“They measure the circumference, and sound the depth of human nature with a comprehensive, all-penetrating spirit, at the manifestations of which they are themselves, perhaps, the most sincerely astonished,—for it is less *their* spirit than the spirit of the age.”

But speaking of Byron in his human capacity. The Byron of England and Geneva, and the Byron of Italy, or at least Pisa, were widely different persons. His talk was, at that time, a dilution of his letters, full of *persiflage* and

¹ This extract from *The Defence of Poetry* also is very badly given. Apart from the misspelling of *hierophants* (not Shelley's), the fourth and fifth sentences should read—

“the trumpets which sing to battle and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves.”

calembourg [*sic*]. Shelley used to compare him to Voltaire, to whom he would have thought it the greatest compliment to be compared ; for if there was any one writer whom he admired more than another, it was the author of *Candide*. Like Voltaire, he looked upon converse as a relaxation, not an exercise of mind. Both professed the same speculative—I might say, sceptical turn of mind ; the same power of changing the subject from the grave to the gay ; the same mastery over the sublime, the pathetic, the comic. No, he differed from the philosopher of Ferney in one respect,—he never scoffed at religion. His boss of veneration was strongly developed, and had he returned to England, he would, I have little doubt, have died, as Rochester did, and as Tommy Moore lives, in the odour of sanctity. In fact he was always afraid to confess to himself his own infidelity.

Shelley frequently lamented that it was almost impossible to keep Byron to any one given point. He flew about from subject to subject like a will-o'-the-wisp, touching them with a false fire, without throwing any real or steady light on any. There was something enchanting in his manner, his voice, his smile—a fascination in them ; but on leaving him, I have often marvelled that I gained so little from him worth carrying away ; whilst every word of Shelley's was almost oracular ; his reasoning subtle and profound ; his opinions, whatever they were, sincere and undisguised ; whilst with Byron, such was his love of mystification, it was impossible to know when he was in earnest. As in the writings of the Greek philosophers, there was always an under-current. He dealt, too, in the gross and indelicate, of which Shelley had an utter abhorrence, and often left him with ill-disguised disgust. At times, however, but they only, like

angels' visits, few and far between, he, as was said of Raphael, could pass from the greatest jesting to the greatest seriousness with the most charming grace. To get him into an argument was a very difficult matter. Mr. Hogg, speaking of Shelley, says,—“Never was there a more unexceptionable disputant. He was the only arguer I ever knew, who drew every argument from the nature of the thing, and who could never be provoked to descend to personal contentions. He was free from the weaknesses of our nature—conceit, irritability, vanity, and impatience of contradiction.”

“The Eternal Child!”¹ this beautiful expression, so true in its application to Shelley! I borrow from Mr. Gilfillan, and I am tempted to add the rest of his eloquent parallel between Shelley and Lord Byron, as far as it relates to their external appearance. In the forehead and head of Byron there was a more massive power and breadth: Shelley's had a smooth, arched, spiritual expression; wrinkles there seemed none on his brow; it was as if

¹ *A Gallery of Literary Portraits* by George Gilfillan is perhaps less referred to nowadays than it deserves to be. In good time to be of service to Medwin, De Quincey contributed four papers on the work to *Tait's Magazine* for November and December 1845 and January and April 1846. Of course he had much to say on his own account about Shelley, who was his neighbour when living with Harriett, near Keswick. Medwin evidently annexed all he could of such valuable plunder, but cites De Quincey so baldly as to give no notion where he says such and such things, or on what occasion. It is only at the end of the book (see *post*, p. 441) that he goes so far as to record that “De Quincey on Gilfillan, says” &c. The whole of

the articles in *Tait's Magazine* mentioned above are reprinted in vol. xi of the *Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey* in 14 volumes, edited by David Masson for A. & C. Black, Edinburgh, 1889-90. Besides Shelley and Keats, these interesting papers deal with Godwin, Foster, and Hazlitt. The Shelley part begins on page 354 of the said eleventh volume.

It was not Medwin whose enterprise led him to “borrow from Mr. Gilfillan,” but Thomas De Quincey, from whom Medwin stole the “borrowed” expression with the words of comment on it, and the rest of the note in *Tait's Magazine* here reproduced—as usual inaccurately and incompletely. See the Introduction to this edition.

perpetual youth had there dropped its freshness. Byron's eye seemed the focus of pride and lust; Shelley's was mild, pensive, fixed on you, but seeing through the mist of its own idealism. Defiance curled Byron's nostril, and sensuality steeped his full, large lips; the lower portions of Shelley's face were frail, feminine, and flexible. Byron's head was turned upwards; as if, having proudly risen above his contemporaries, he were daring to claim kindred, or to demand a contest with a superior order of beings; Shelley's was half bent in reverence and humility before some vast vision seen by his eye alone. In the portrait of Byron, taken at the age of nineteen, you see the unnatural age of premature passion. His hair is grey [*sic* for *young*], his dress is youthful, but his face is old. In Shelley you see the eternal child, none the less because the hair is grey, and that "sorrow seems half his immortality."

No one had a higher opinion of Shelley—of his heart and his head, than Byron; to both these he has done ample credit. I have often been present when the noble poet handed to his friend what he had written during the morning, particularly *Heaven and Earth*, which Shelley read to us when it was copying by Mrs. Shelley, who was occasionally Byron's amanuensis. Shelley was much struck by the choral parts, and repeated twice or three times over as a specimen of great lyrical harmony.

Anah. Sister, sister! I view them winging
Their bright way through the parted night!

Aholibamah. The clouds from off their pinions flinging,
As though they bore to-morrow's light.

Anah. But should our father see the sight?

Aholibamah. He would but deem it was the moon,
Rising unto some sorcerer's tune,
An hour too soon.

Nor did Shelley admire alone the lyrics of this *Mystery*, and had he lived to see *The Loves of the Angels*, of which it was the type, would have thought that in its sublimity, its simplicity, and its pathos, it bore the same relation to that meretricious poem, which the figurante of the Pitti does to the *Venus of the Tribune*.

Cain also had arrived, which Shelley had seen begun at Ravenna; of which, speaking in one of his letters, he says,—“In my opinion it contains finer poetry than has appeared in England since the publication of the *Paradise Regained*; *Cain* is apocalyptic.” It was a frequent subject of conversation between the two poets. Byron read us Hobhouse’s opinion,—“that it was worse than the worst bombast of Dryden (sage critic!) and that it was not a work to which he would have ventured to put his name in the days of Pope, Churchill, and Johnson” (a strange trinity). I shall reserve what I have to say of this gentleman, an inveterate enemy of Shelley’s, to another place.

Shelley was supposed to have greatly influenced Byron in the design of the drama; at least, he was so accused by Hobhouse and Moore; an accusation to which Shelley remarks,—“How happy should I not be to attribute to myself, however indirectly, any participation in that immortal work!” Though he might have had nothing to do with the origination, or the general treatment of the drama,—and indeed, the tone of *Cain*’s language was emphatically Byronic,—I have reason to think that Byron owes to Shelley the platonic idea of the Hades,—the pre-adamite worlds, and their phantasmal shapes, perhaps suggested by Lucian’s *Icaro Menippus*. Lord Byron had certainly a profound respect for Shelley’s judgment. I have mentioned being present when the MS. of *The Deformed Transformed* was placed in his hands,—and

Shelley's remarks after perusing it,—“ that he liked it the least of all his works ; that it smelt too strongly of *Faust* ; and besides, that there were two lines in it, word for word from Southey.” On which occasion Byron turned deadly pale, seized the MS., and committed it to the flames, seeming to take a savage delight in seeing it consume. But it was destined to rise again from its ashes. Poets, like mothers, have a strange fondness for their rickety offspring. Byron thought that all his writings were equally good, and always vindicated strenuously those which were the least popular, particularly in the case of the Version from Pulci, which Mr. Moore says “ must be fated to be unread ; ” not that the version itself was bad, —on the contrary, it was most faithful ; but the poem was not worth translating, and is totally at variance with the taste of the English public. My notion is, that Lord Byron's object was to shew the inferiority of the original, considered the best of the productions of the Italian weavers of merry octava rima, to *Don Juan*, and intended to blind the world to a belief that it was derived from any source but the right one. None of the forty commentators or critics (the number is ominous, certainly a most formidable array of living cavaliers, that have entered the lists against a dead man) being at all aware that the Novelle of Casti were the prototypes of *Don Juan*,—much less that it was framed and modelled after the *Diavolessa*, and which Byron first read at Brussels in 1816, as may be seen from an anonymous contribution to *The New Monthly Magazine* of that year. Leigh Hunt says, “ that he is so jealous of being indebted to any one for a hint, that he was disconcerted at the mention I made in the *Liberal*, of Whistlecraft's specimen, the precursor of *Beppo* and *Don Juan* ; and I believe that the praise he bestows on

the pseudonymous author, when he asks, 'who the *devil* can have done this *diabolically* well-written letter?' is in consequence of the sentiments therein contained being in accordance with the mystification he wished to keep up." Leigh Hunt goes on to say,—"*that it is utter humbug to say that it is borrowed from the style of the Italian weavers of merry octava rima.*" Shelley seems to have been of the same opinion, and during his visits to Ravenna, speaking of *Don Juan*, says,—

"Byron has read to me one of his unpublished cantos of *Don Juan*, which is astonishingly fine. It sets him not only above, but far above all the poets of the age. Every word is stamped with immortality. I despair of rivalling Lord Byron, and well I may; and there is no other with whom it is worth contending. The canto is in the style, but totally, and sustained with considerable ease and power, like the end of the second canto. There is not a word which the most rigid assessor of the dignity of human nature would desire to be cancelled; it fulfils in a certain measure what I have long preached of producing, *something wholly new*, and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful; it may be vanity, but I think I see the traces of my earnest exhortations to him to create something [wholly] new!"¹

I now proceed to investigate "the humbug of Byron's having borrowed from the weavers of the octava rima," and to show whether it was "something new."

In the *Diavolessa* of Casti, two Spanish scapegraces scour their native country, dividing its cities among them in search of love adventures; the one is called Don Ignazio, the other Don Juan, but as dramatists and their kind have disposed of the latter personage, to the quieting of all consciences that might dread his prowess, Casti took for his hero Don Ignazio; Byron has taken Don Juan. Casti says of Don Ignazio,—

Naque [*sic*], e l'infanzia sua passò [*sic*] in Seviglia;

¹ In the letter to Mary from which this generous tribute is taken (*Essays &c.*, ii, 312) various

divergences from the Medwinized text occur,—as *incredible* for *considerable* and *degree* for *measure*.

Byron of Don Juan,—

In Seville he was born, a pleasant city.

Casti says of the parentage of Don Ignazio,—

La nobil sua famiglia

Direttamente scendea fin de' ré Goti;

Byron of Don Juan's,—

He traced his source

Through the most gothic gentlemen of Spain.

The Juan and Ignazio of Casti were both precocious, so was the hero of Lord Byron, and the age of twelve was marked as an epoch by both poets.

Entrambo quinti a dodici anni appena.

At twelve he was a fine but quiet boy.

Casti takes his hero out to sea, he is shipwrecked, and considering how little of a sailor an Italian abbé can be, the description of it, though partly derived from classical authors, will be found most powerful. We certainly do marvel that this probable cause of Byron's Shipwreck has never been suggested, and it is a striking ignorance of the best critics. The sources whence he drew the technicalities of terms have been noticed often enough, but it was never once hinted, that Casti could possibly have suggested the idea. Moreover, in the Shipwreck of the Italian, there is an expression that Byron has evidently copied,—the *si spezzò*, the going down of the ship, in either case told in two lines; by the Italian,—

Il quarto dì contro uno scoglio urtò,

D'Africa sulle coste, e si spezzò; *

while Byron does it thus:

She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And going down headforemost—*sunk in short.*

*—hit

The fourth day upon Afric's coast—and split—

But further, Casti's hero, of all the crew, is the only one saved ; so it is with Byron's ; and more singular still, a dove, or something like one, appears to each in their moments of need.

It was a beautiful white bird,
Web-footed, and not unlike a dove in size
And plumage,¹

that appeared to Juan ; and the most beautiful part of the stanza,—

It came and went and fluttered round, &c.
which is, “e giva e fea ritorno svolazzando,” evidently is a plagiarism from Casti. According to the Italian tale, Don Juan and Don Ignazio meet in Hell. Byron meant his hero to finish there.

A panoramic view of Hell's in training, &c.

As a general specimen of Casti's style, I subjoin in a note, the Shipwreck ;* to which I refer those who are

* At eventide, nor once the ship they wore,
They made the mouth of Gibraltar's straits,
The bound of either continent, where the hoar
And swoln sea, fettered, ever roars and beats.
That ocean seems indignant of a shore,
And oft makes ravage there of all it meets.
And thus to menace this frail craft with wreck,
A sudden squall and heavy drove them back.
In haste the mariners, with terror pale,
In with the deadlights, each a separate door
To man's destruction,—close-reef every sail.
Boils the swoln surge, winds rave, and billows roar.
Fear reigns supreme. There's nothing like a gale
For taming tiger man. On either shore
They wildly gaze, and scarce can draw their breath,
In thinking how they shall escape from death.

¹ About this time a beautiful
white bird,
Webfooted, not unlike a dove in
size
And plumage (probably it might
have erred

Upon its course), passed oft
before their eyes,
And tried to perch, although it
saw and heard
The men within the boat, . . .
Don Juan, canto ii, stanza 94.

curious about this matter,—(to my mind set at rest,) as well as the stanza beginning,—“Ma la grazia di ciel.”*

Comes mounting on the deck,† like a wild horse,
 With shock that skill and seamanship defies,
 A giant breaker, with the united force
 Of lesser breakers foaming. The spray flies,
 And reflux sweeps the helmsman—and still worse
 The helm. Ermenigilda! in thine eyes,
 For bridal joys strange terrors then we see.
 Poor thing! the sight of death’s but left to thee!
 The main-mast gone, and with it the bowsprit,
 She wounded lies in a most crazy state,
 With water in her hold at least six feet.
 To give them hopes, she should at any rate
 Have had a helm and binnacle. I repeat,
 That none who saw that craft could doubt her fate.
 Four days she drove towards Africa, and hit
 At last upon a sunken rock, *and split*.
 Then all was wreck, and as she thumped the ground,
 All were washed overboard, and then a few
 Struck by the spars went down; with bubbling sound,
 Others gave up the ghost, till all the crew
 Were in the eddying whirlpool sucked, and drowned.
 And must the merciless wave thee swallow too,
 Ermenigild?—to save thee was there none?—
 Sole author of these ills, escaped our Don.

* But grace divine, or Heaven’s exceeding love,
 That oft repulsed, desiring still to stay,
 Went and came, like the olive-bearing dove,
 Flew round and round, nor would be driven away;
 Did easy access to his bosom prove,
 (For trials melt the hardest hearts) that day.
 She folds on Don Ignazio, as to rest
 Her wings, and seems to light upon his breast.

Like Don Juan Don Ignatio [*sic*].—

With force of arms—for a stout swimmer he
 Touched land, and climbed the beach, and wildly stared
 Upon a desert heaped with hills of sand,
 A parched inhospitable—barren Land. &c.

† And the waves bound beneath me like a steed
 That knows its rider. (*Childe Harold*, canto iii., st. 2.)

Werner was also a play written during this winter, and of which Byron produced to myself and Shelley an Act, (the longest, I think the fourth,) the fruit of one mighty morning's labour. The MS. had scarcely an emendation; unlike that of *Heaven and Earth*, which was so interlined as scarcely to be legible. "Werner would be a better acting play," said Shelley, "than a closet one." His words have been confirmed. "It is," says the editor of Byron's works, "the only one of his dramas that has been successful in representation. It is still in possession of the stage,"¹ but how long will it be so, when the roscius of the Age, the ultimus Romanorum leaves it?

Shelley used to say, that the magnetism of Byron—"the Byronic Energy," *Βίρωις βία* as he called Byron—was hostile to his powers; that, like the reading of Dante, the outpouring of his works produced in him a despair.

In a letter to Horace Smith he says, "I have lived too long near Lord Byron, and the sun has extinguished my glowworm; for I cannot hope with St. John, that the light came into the world and the world knew it not." I have said that when he was with Byron at Geneva, he wrote but little, such was the case now.

I must now speak of his *Charles the First*. He had designed to write a tragedy on this ungrateful subject as far back as 1818, and had begun it at the end of the following year, when he asked me to obtain for him that well-known pamphlet, which was in my father's library,—*Killing no murder*. He was, however, *in limine* diverted at that time to more attractive subjects, and now resumed

¹ The note on this point was dated 1832, and appeared in Murray's seventeen-volume edition of Byron's Works (xiv, 116). Wil-

liam Charles Macready, whose first appearance in *Werner* took place in 1830, took his farewell benefit at Drury Lane on February 26, 1851.

his abandoned labours, of which he has left a very unsatisfactory, though valuable Bozzo. The task seemed to him an irksome one. His progress was slow; one day he expunged what he had written the day before. He occasionally shewed and read to me his MS., which was lined and interlined and interworded, so as to render it almost illegible. The scenes were disconnected, and intended to be interwoven in the tissue of the drama. He did not thus compose *The Cenci*. He seemed tangled in an inextricable web of difficulties, as to the treatment of his subject; and it was clear that he had formed no definite plan in his own mind, how to connect the links of the complicated yarn of events that led to that frightful catastrophe, or to justify it. There is in the Uffizzi gallery, at Florence, an unfinished bust by Michael Angelo, of Brutus, on which is written an epigram, the point of which is, that the great sculptor wisely abandoned the task from disgust at the traitor;¹ might not similar influences have raised an obstacle in the mind of Shelley, to the completion of his unwelcome undertaking? The poet, deeply versed as he was in ancient history, strange to say, as he owns himself, was imperfectly read in that of his own country, or in his own words, "I am unfortunately little skilled in English History, and the interest which it excites in me is so feeble that I find it a duty to attain merely to that general knowledge of it which is indispensable." He had no means of procuring, or had failed to procure, necessary books of reference as to the times. If Godwin's *History of the Commonwealth*, or Carlyle's *Cromwell* had then

¹ Mrs. Browning, in *Casa Guidi Windows*, throws out the nobler suggestion that the sculptor dropped the mallet on gazing into futurity and realizing that such folk as the

murderers of Rossi might arrogate to themselves the style and title of Brutus—"a poor maimed copy of Brutus," she exclaims.

appeared, he would have had better data than those supplied by Hume ; not that either of the two first authors are perhaps more impartial, or implicitly to be relied on as authorities ; for how few Historians are there who do not see thro' the false medium of prejudice, who are not dominated by their preconceived notions, and warp events to suit their own political views, making them a starting point and a goal. Hear what old Montaigne says,

“Erreur particulier, fait premierement, l'erreur publique, et a son tour, apres, l'erreur publique fait l'errer particuliere, ainsi va tout ce bastiment, s'etouffant et formant, de main en main, de maniere que le plus éloigné temoin en est mieux instruit que le plus voisin, et le dernier informé mieux par suite que le premier. C'est un progrès naturel. Car quiconque croit quelque chose estime que c'est ouvrage de charité de persuader à un autre—Et pour le faire, ne craint point d'adjouster de son invention autant qu'il void être necessaire en son compte pour suppléer a la resistance & au defaut qu'il pense être en la conception d'autrui.”

Shelley could not reconcile his mind to the beheading of Charles. He looked upon him as the slave of circumstances, as the purest in morals, the most exemplary of husbands and fathers,—great in misfortune, a martyr in death ; and could not help contrasting his character and motives with those of the low-minded, counterfeit patriots, the crafty, canting, bad men, who hatched that murderous conspiracy,—much less could he make a hero of that arch-hypocrite, Cromwell, or forgive him for aiming at the royal sceptre. He was not blind to the energy of Cromwell's foreign policy, nor insensible to the greatness to which he raised England, but reprobated his unconstitutional use of power, his trampling on all law, by a military despotism more odious than the worst acts of his predecessor. He hated the Puritans,—not their tenets so much as

their intolerance. He abominated the atrocities which, on the plea of religion, were perpetrated on the devoted Irish Catholics, and he might have considered as the adder-slime which the Commonwealth spawned, those fit instruments of the vengeance of that sanguinary coward Charles the Second, Scroggs and Guildford, and the still more infamous Jefferys, who sentenced to a death of lingering torture, Algernon Sidney. There was a similarity in the destinies of Shelley and his kinsman; one was condemned on the doubtful evidences of a MS., the other, on that of an unpublished poem, was doomed to have his character blackened, and his children torn from him by the decree of another times-serving judge, whose biographer should not have forgotten to record this damnatory act among the records of [his] life. It is singular, also, that the two Lord Chancellors should have had one trait in common: they could shed at will "millstone tears."

Shelley meant to have made the last of king's fools, Archy, a more than subordinate among his dramatis personæ, as Calderon has done in his *Cisma d'Ingalaterra*, a fool *sui generis*, who talks in fable, "weaving a world of mirth out of the wreck of all around."

The poet was not so great a republican at heart as Mrs. Shelley makes him out.¹ No one was a truer admirer of our triune constitution. He did not love a democracy, and was in some respects as aristocratic as Byron, and was far from despising the advantages of birth and station; being proud even of his connection with the Sidneys. Plato in his Patrician tastes laid stress on the distinctions of birth. It is true that "his hatred of a despotism that

¹ These and the ensuing twelve lines consist of contradictions and inaccurate extracts from the first

paragraph of Mary Shelley's Note of 1839 on the Poems of 1819.

looked upon the people as not to be consulted, or protected from want or ignorance, was extreme; and the news of the Manchester Massacre roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion; and made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist;" which feeling inspired his *Masque of Anarchy*, his *Ode to the Assertors of Liberty*, his *Similies* [*sic*] (for Sidmouth and Castlereagh), his *Lines during the Castlereagh Administration*, his *Song to the Men of England*, and his *God save the Queen*, meaning Liberty. But it was not over complimentary to the people, his making the swinish multitude in *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, the Chorus. His ideas had become much modified since he wrote in his boyhood a panegyric on Margaret Nicholson, his notes to *Queen Mab*, and *The Revolt of Islam*, where he calls the French revolution, "the last hope of trampled France," "a brief dream of unremaining glory," and "a voice of despair;" and he would not have called Coleridge's *Ode to Switzerland* the most perfect of compositions,—the most faultless in spirit and truth in our language,—had he not entertained latterly, similar opinions with that author on the Revolution, and its "Bacchanals of blood." More than once I have heard Shelley declaim that sublime Ode, to which I have already made allusion.

Shelley used to say, that a republic was the best form of government, with disinterestedness; abnegation of self, and a Spartan virtue; but to produce which required the black bread and soup of the Lacedemonians, an equality of fortunes unattainable in the present factitious state of society, and only to be brought about by an agrarian law, and a consequent baptism of blood; and quoted the sentiment of the amiable Rousseau, that he had rather behold the then state of things, than the shedding a single drop.

With which coincidence of sentiment, Shelley used strongly to reprobate Wordsworth's—

Yes, Slaughter
Is God's daughter.

Plato's was a republic of which certainly Shelley could not have approved, for from that, poets were to be excluded. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* was, and is a bye-word. He was by no means in love with a republic, from his acquaintance with the Swiss; and had he lived to see the anarchy and confusion, and intolerance and bloodshed that have desolated many Cantons, the Sonderbund War, and persecution of the Catholics, he would have still less advocated a renewal of the experiment. And as to America, I remember an observation of his, "that it was easier to form than unform or reform, and that even the United States were too young for us to judge of their duration; that the President had more power than the head of a constitutional government ought to have; a power too dangerous,—a wider field for corruption"; and Shelley hated slavery too sincerely in all its forms, not to reprobate the existence of that crying evil, a disgrace to humanity, and the eighteenth century.

Shelley frequently used to inveigh against the political economists; whose object is to stop the progress of mankind, and to keep up the *uti possedetis*. He thought that Godwin's answer to Malthus's *Essay on Population*, was incontrovertible; and that the latter, who from certain hypothetical calculations, which he conceived were confirmed by the returns of North America, drew the conclusion, that "Population, where it is unchecked, goes on doubling itself every twenty-five years, or increases in a geometrical ratio, whilst the means of subsistence, under circumstances the most favourable to human industry,

could not possibly increase faster than in an arithmetical ratio," was negatived by the census of all nations; and that instead of every married pair having twelve children, four, or four and a half was the result. The returns of North America being no criterion, owing to the immigration.

I have heard Shelley strongly reprobate an axiom of Malthus, that in a well-regulated state, no one should relieve the necessity of his neighbour. It must be remarked, however, that Shelley seems to have afterwards taken a more favourable view of Malthus's writings in general, for he says,—“Malthus is a clever man, and the world would be a great gainer, if it would seriously take his lessons into consideration,—if it were capable of attending seriously to anything but mischief. But what on earth does he mean by some of his inferences?” What those are, I need not explain. Cobbett afterwards developed them.

But to return to *Charles I.* Other causes besides doubt as to the manner of treating the subject, operated to impede its progress. The ever growing fastidiousness of his taste, had, I have often thought, begun to cramp his genius. The opinion of the world too, at times shook his confidence in himself and generated doubts that he was unprofitably wasting his energies, that produce what he might, he was doomed to be unread. I have often been shewn the scenes of this tragedy on which he was engaged; like the MS. of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, in the library of Ferrara, his were larded with word on word, till they were scarcely decipherable. I remember a printed copy of his *Revolt of Islam*, that was similarly interlined.¹ The *Queen Mab* in the possession of

¹ This was probably the copy of manuscript changes were made to
Laon and Cythna in which the convert the poem into *The Revolt of*

Mr. Brooks, which I have spoken of, had innumerable *pentimenti*; and when I one day objected to this self-hypercriticism, he replied,—“The source of poetry is native and involuntary, but requires severe labour in its development.” He had intended on first coming to Italy to compose a Tragedy on the subject of Tasso’s Madness—a subject as he says if properly treated admirably dramatic and poetical—as proved by Göthe’s—and it is to be lamented that he had not carried his design into execution.

He sometimes used to say, that he looked to Germany and America for his appreciation after his death, and he judged rightly. Gutzkow, the first dramatic, and one of the most spiritual writers in the first of these countries, in a treatise entitled, “Gods, Demigods, and Don Quixotes,” places Shelley at the head of this category. Two translations of Shelley’s works have already appeared, and a third is far advanced by the talented Madame de Ploennies, well known from the admirable translations contained in her *Britannia*. The poets of the new world have taken Shelley as their model, as may be seen by the works of Bryant, Willis, and others. His poems are widely circulated in the Union, and are found even in the far West. Would that Shelley had had a prescience of all his posthumous fame! it would have rejoiced his spirit. At times, however, he, like the great object of his admiration, Milton, had a foreboding of his coming greatness, and would quote the prophetic words of our English Mæonides: “This I know, that whether in prosing or in versing, there is something in my writings that shall live for ever.”

Islam. The Brooks copy of *Queen Mab* is the one in which the second part of *The Dæmon of the World* was

produced. Both books are fully described in my large edition of Shelley and in *The Shelley Library*.

"Yes." I quoted, (and this is taken from the note of a conversation I had with Shelley,)

That sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide
Trampled, and mocked with many a loathed rite
Of lust and blood; he went unterrified
Into the gulph of death; but his clear sprite
Yet reigns on earth, the third among the sons of light.¹

"And Shakspeare," I added, "was he well treated by his contemporaries? But he wrote 'for all time' and not his own. He, too, lives for ever in his land's language."

"And a glorious language it is!" said Shelley.

"What, 'that guttural, sputter-all' language,—you do not mean to compare it with German, or even with Italian?"

"Doubtless," replied Shelley, "there is no medium for poetry superior to our own. Its numerous monosyllables, for which we are indebted to the Saxons, enable us to squeeze into a line more matter than can be included in a German, Italian, or French one. The Portuguese is perhaps an exception, as you found in the vain attempt of putting the octave stanza of the *Lousiada* into our own. I suspect also," he added, "that ours is the most musical of all languages, in spite of what Byron says, and the most sonorous, though it does not admit of so many poetical licences as the Italian, and is poor in rhymes, especially double rhymes,—at least for serious poetry. *Hudibras* and *Don Juan* prove that for comic there is no want of such. German is indeed a mighty tongue, but harsh and consonantal. German hexameters I cannot, and never could endure. For rendering Greek it is unapproachable, admitting of a coinage of compound words on which we

¹ *Adonais*, stanza iv.

cannot venture,—that would be hostile to the spirit of our language, if carried to excess.”

“That I can hardly admit,” I replied, “when I read your *Prometheus Unbound*. You have there combined and compounded, not two, but frequently more words; and you have fabricated some which I should scarcely hold to be legitimate; for instance, *interpenetrate*.”

“I did not make it,” he rejoined. “It is used by Coleridge—quite authority enough.” “But,” he added, “I can make words, which you cannot.”

There was in this observation a sense of his power—a consciousness of that fame, of which with a prophetic eye he saw the dawn.

There arose out of the conversation to which I have above referred, on languages, a view of their comparative merits. I quoted Latin as instances of its terseness in rendering Voltaire’s epigram—

Qui que to sois, voici ton maître,
Il est, il fut, ou il doit etre.*

Quisquis es en Dominum, Dominus fuit, aut erit, aut est;

and added,—“You will perceive that the Dominus was, though unnecessary, obliged to be introduced to make the Hexameter Line.”

Plato’s epigram on Aster, which Shelley had applied to Keats, happened to be mentioned,—

Αστηρ πριν μεν ελαμπες, ενι ζωοισιν Εως,
Νυν δε θανων λαμπεις, Εσπερος εν θιμεροισ [sic for φθιμενοισ],—

and I asked Shelley if he could render it. He took up the pen and improvised:

* It appears that Byron has thus rendered this epigram verbatim,—
Whoever you are your master see,
He is, or was, or ought to be.

Thou wert a morning star among the living,
 Ere thy fair light was fled ;
 Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
 New splendour to the dead.¹

I said, the version was too paraphrastic, and suggested the following:—

Thou wert a morning star to us,
 And dying art our Hesperus.

and in Latin, which I have taken as one of the epigraphs of these volumes,—

Tu, vivens, vivis, fers lucem, ut stella diei,
 At nunc heu moriens! Hesperus, Aster eris.

That Shelley should have written but little during the winter, independent of the causes I have assigned, may also be accounted for by his being too much broken in upon and distracted by society, to concentrate his mind on any one subject. It has been remarked that Company represses thought and Genius wants solitude for its boldest and happiest exertions. So was it with Shelley. His muse admitted of no coquetry—she was *exigeante*, and demanded his whole soul and affections. Solitude and isolation were indispensable to *him*, for the developement of his profound and metaphysical ideas; but “*en-revanche*,” he read as wont seven or eight hours a-day. He had received a quarto edition of Lord Bacon’s works, which he devoured with avidity, and we read together some parts of Spinoza, of which volume he told an excellent story. On entering Rome, the *Doganieri* laid hands on his books, among which was the very Spinoza, and the Bible. “Which do you suppose,” said he, with one of his peculiar laughs, “they confiscated?—the Bible!” We seldom read

¹ This may be a genuine variant. for *a* in line 1 and *had* for *was* in
 The accepted version reads *the* line 2.

new works of fiction, but made an exception in favour of *Antar*, which we borrowed from Byron, and found greatly interesting. This Jack-the-Giant-Killer romance, abounds with vivid and picturesque, but overcharged descriptions of the scenery and manners of the tribes of the Desert, and his *Lines from the Arabic* were almost a translation from a translation in that Oriental fiction. *Antar* is a straw that floated for a moment on the stream, and has been engulfed—forgotten.¹ It is an oblivious world. I often asked Shelley if he had never attempted to write like Matthias, in Italian, and he showed me a sort of serenade which I give as a curiosity,—but proving that he had not made a profound study of the language, which, like Spanish, he had acquired without a grammar,—trusting to his fine ear and memory, rather than to rules.

Buona notte.

Buona notte! buona notte! come mai

La notte sia buona senza te.

Non dir'mi buona notte,—che tu sai,

La notte sa star buona da per se.

¹ In 1876 I tried (unsuccessfully) to identify the passage in Terriek Hamilton's *Antar, a Bedoueen Romance* (1819-20) which had inspired Shelley with the marvellous lyric *From the Arabic, an Imitation*. I have not yet found any one passage that supports the biographer's view. But I do not more than half believe that the song is so near to any individual outpouring in that remarkable work as Medwin says. It seems to me more like the thrice distilled and purified essence of the spirit of devotion diffused throughout the romance. At the most it could only represent in a highly idealized form some utterance of Ibla, the cousin and beloved of the death-

dealing black champion of her tribe while away on one of his innumerable blood-thirsty forays in the desert. I do not wholly despair of finding somewhere in *Antar's* fifteen hundred pages something a little resembling Shelley's song in thought; but all the poetry in the four volumes is translated into plain prose; and in metrical form this poem has always seemed to me a veritable lyric of Shelley's, peculiarly unimitative. It has wonderful atmosphere, and brings back to one's mind the atmosphere of that masterly book of the late William Gifford Palgrave, *Hermann Agha; an Eastern Narrative* (London, 2 vol. 1872).

Solinga, scura, cupa, senza speme
 La notte, quando Lilla m'abbandona,
 Pei cuori, chi si batton insieme,
 Ogni notte senza dirla, sara buona.
 Come male buona notte si suona,
 Con sospiri, e parole interrotte,
 Il modo di aver la notte buona,
 E mai non di dir la buona notte.

To which I made a version that pleased him better, he said, than the one he had himself written, and which I never saw till it appeared in Mrs. Shelley's edition of his poems. Excuse, reader, my giving my own.

Good night! good night! oh say not so—
 Where thou art not, can night be good?
 Say not good night—night's good, you know,
 Whether we would not, or we would.
 Dark, silent, hopeless, drear, and lone,
 Night seems when thou withdraw'st thy light.
 To hearts, that only beat as one,
 There needs no voice to say Good night.
 Good night's a sound ill understood,
 In sighs and murmurs of delight;
 The only way night can be good,
 Is never, love, to say Good night.

Shelley had also begun at this time *The Triumph of Life*, of which we have a fragment. It advanced very slowly, and in its present form it is impossible to know how he intended to treat the subject; the lines are of a gorgeous magnificence. Singularly enough, this vision of Shelley's, by a coincidence (for I am convinced it was one, and that he had never read Cardon's works,) was nearly the same as that eccentric writer's, as may be seen by the following comparative extracts:—

Illucente Aurorâ, visus sum toto humano genere, maximâ que turbâ mulierum, non solum ac virorum, sed puerorum, atque infantium, juxta radicem montis, qui mihi a dextrâ erat, currere. Cum

admiratione captus, unum a turbâ interrogarem, quonam omnes tam precipiti cursu tenderemus. *Ad mortem* respondit.

Thus Shelley:

Methought I sate beside a public way,
Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream
Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,
All hastening onward, but none seemed to know
Whither he went, and whence he came, or why
He made one of the multitude, and so
Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky,
One of the million leaves of summer's bier,
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,
Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear;
Some flying from the thing they feared, and some
Seeking the object of another's fear,
And others with swift steps towards the tomb
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,
And others mournfully within the gloom
Of their own shadows walked – and *called it death*.

Hellas, which had been written during the autumn, and sent to England to be printed, I did not see till some months after; but we often discussed the Greek revolution, and he was enthusiastic in his aspirations for her liberty. He would not believe but that the picture drawn by Mr. Hope in his *Anastasius*, of the modern Greeks, was an overcharged one; though he admitted that a long course of political slavery under their Mahomedan masters, had so demoralised and bastardised the nation, that important changes must be undergone before it could be regenerated; but of this he entertained no fears. The opening Chorus of *Hellas* is taken from the *Principe Costante* of Calderon, as Shelley pointed out to me; and the drama an imitation of the *Persians* of Æschylus. It is, as Shelley says himself, “full of lyrical poetry,” and I

might add, the most beautiful. The Choruses are wonderfully imaginative, and melodious in their versification, and splendidly exemplify his peculiarity of style. Whether Byron's "Isles of Greece" suggested the closing Chorus, I know not. The adoption of the same metre might have been a coincidence.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains,
 From waves serener far;
 A new Peneus rolls its [*sic for his*] fountains
 Against the morning-star,
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.
 A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
 Fraught with a later prize,
 Another Orpheus sings again,
 And loves, and weeps, and dies.
 A new Ulysses bears [*sic for leaves*] once more
 Calypso, for his native shore.
 Another Athens shall arise,
 And to remoter time,
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendour of its prime;
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,
 All Earth can take, or Heaven can give.
 Saturn and Love their long repose
 Shall burst more bright and good
 Than all who fell—than One who rose,
 Than many unsubdued.
 Not gold nor blood their altar dowers,
 But votive tears and symbol flowers.

What is this glorious hymn, of which I have transcribed only a few Stanzas, but another "Isles of Greece?" indeed it yields in nothing to Byron's strain; and the prophecy is such as poets love to dwell upon, and Shelley most of all,—the regeneration of mankind, though clouded with the melancholy foreboding of the horrors that the struggle must cost. It is impossible to tell how much this drama.

and the enthusiasm of Shelley, influenced the determination of Byron to devote his energies to the sacred cause. If he was to have died young, he could not have died at a better moment for his fame. Nothing, however, in 1821 and the beginning of 1822, was further from my thoughts, than that he would have taken any part in the struggle. He out-anastasiused *Anastasius* in his view of the Greek character. He used to say, "that the Greeks were so fallen, that it would be a vain attempt to raise them. One might as well hope to re-animate a corpse." Words that had no sincerity in them, for perhaps at that very time, with his usual love of mystification he had decided in his own mind to join their cause, which, if he thought so desperate and unworthy, he would never have done, nor have embarked in it so large a portion of his fortune; not that he risked indeed the money, for it was raised on the security of the Greek Loan (friend Hobhouse satisfying him of the validity of the security,) and was in fact repaid before his death—a fortunate exception for his Heirs, considering, that to this day I believe the Fundholders in the Greek Loan have never received—the principal is out of the question—even their interest. In Byron were, as I have said, two natures,—the man and the poet were different entities. This incongruity between his poetical sentiments and his prose ones, was very remarkable. In the case of the Greeks, the former prevailed. Shelley used to say that "on this subject, or any other, it was not easy to see his mind through the mists he delighted to throw around it." No one mystified so much,—indeed it was impossible to know when he was in jest or in earnest. If he mystified Shelley, no wonder that he should often have mystified me in our daily and nightly conversations; though, *singularly enough*, almost every word in them has

been repeated in Moore's Life, taken from Byron's Autobiography, pretended to be burnt, and of which autobiography, Washington Irving writing to me, says, "Whilst reading your *Conversations*, (he, as well as half-a-dozen others, *had* perused it,) I thought, page after page, that I was reading Byron's MS." But if he mystified me and Shelley, he still more mystified his biographer; as instances of which I shall give three or four proofs out of three or four hundred I could cite. "His lordship told me," Moore says in his preface, "that he meant to leave his will in my hands, and that there would be in it a bequest of ten thousand pounds to Madame G[uiccioli]." (He mentioned this circumstance also to Lady Blessington.) "When the news of his death reached me, I took it for granted that this will would be found among his sealed papers, he had left me; but there was no such instrument." Now he had never intended to leave his will with Mr. Moore, nor to make any such bequest, any more than he meant (as he told me) to leave his daughters joint heiresses; for Ada he disinherited in favour of his sister, and to Allegra he left five thousand pounds, saddled with a proviso, that it should be cancelled if she married a foreigner. The next instance I shall adduce of mystification, is the passage in his journal (alias autobiography,) where he wishes to have it believed that the Corsair and himself were one and the same personage, saying,— "Who knows what I was doing in the East?" &c. The third is his mystification respecting his contemporaries, Rogers, Campbell, and Moore, and the high place he allots them in the literary world. As over-politeness is rudeness, so over-flattery is dispraise, and over-disparagement of self, excess of vanity. Shelley was always indignant at the high rank he assigned to Campbell and

Rogers; a rank Byron has put on record by a diagram or triangular gradus ad Parnassum; and again in another place, where after Walter Scott, he says, "I should place Rogers next in the list. I value more the man as *the last of the best school*—Moore and Campbell both third," &c. &c. Elsewhere, it is true, when in the quizzing vein, he in speaking of Lord Thurlow, (the best translator by the way of Anacreon we ever had,) says,—

They tell me Phœbus gave his crown,
Some years before his death, to Rogers.

And see the anecdote in the stage coach, about Lary and Jacky, and

Pretty Miss Jaqueline,
With her nose aquiline.

To prove the inconsistency of his opinions about Rogers and Campbell, he says elsewhere, "I consider Crabbe and Coleridge as the first of these times in point of power and genius." Yet in the text of the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* he calls Coleridge "The Laureate of the long-eared Tribe" [*sic* for *kind*].

The same sarcasms* he threw out here and there respecting Campbell, an offence which he, one of the *irritabile genus*, could never forgive. He had a high opinion of his own merits, (no wonder) and a few years before his death, he told a friend of mine that he had never read any of Shelley's works. This gentleman, a great Liberal and an Italian, paid Campbell a visit at his request, and instead of discussing the prospects and hopes of Italy, he would talk of nothing but Peseto's Translation of *The Pleasures of Hope*, a work that fell dead from the Press, not from the badness of the Translation, but that it was little to the

* See *Letters on Bowles's Strictures on Pope* and Other Letters to Moore, *passim*.

taste of the Italians. Campbell,¹ who laughed at the idea of Shelley being a Poet and said of his *Prometheus Unbound*—"who would bind it?"—Lord Byron Bardolphed in the Erkles vein, though occasionally he gave him here and there a sly rap on the knuckles, to wit, "read Campbell's Poets marked Errors of Tom the Author, &c., and *Gertrude of Wyoming* has no more locality with Pennsylvania, than Penmanmawr. It is particularly full of grossly false scenery, as all Americans declare, though they praise parts of the Poem, &c., and the vulgar age will rest more on the splendour of the uniform than the quality of the troops;" "He has spoiled his best things by over-polish." Is it a wonder that *he* should have been spoiled by Byron's exaggerated praise, and being ranked by him the second of the sons of light? Campbell, however, in later days, knew well what Byron really thought of him and his works, and after the noble poet's death, took strong part against him, as proved by Lady Byron's letter, beginning, "My dear Mr. Campbell," and the Correspondence; but Campbell lies in Westminster Abbey, where, doubtless, his rival, Rogers, will have a niche by his side. Where lies Byron? in some obscure churchyard, the name of which I have forgotten!² The former Edition of this Work

¹ See note *ante* (page 214) on this witticism. Are we to suppose that Campbell was the person who uttered it to Medwin? If so, the Scottish poet got his joke cheaply enough; for he certainly did not originate it.

² In Lord Broughton's *Recollections of a Long Life* (ed. Lady Dorchester, Vol. vi, 1911, p. 121) are two interesting entries on this subject. Under the date June 30, 1844, Sir John Cam Hobhouse, Bart., M.P. to use his then name and style, writes;—"Something should be

done in regard to Byron, more especially after the declaration of the Bishop of London that, Byron having written against Christianity, ought not to have a memorial in the Abbey." Three days later he recorded—"I went, by the invitation of the executors, to Campbell's funeral. We assembled in the Jerusalem Chamber. Sir R. Peel more formal, if possible, than usual. In the room itself were Macaulay, Lord Aberdeen, Mr. B. Disraeli, Monckton Milnes [afterwards created Lord Houghton], Dr. Croly, Lord

contains much that is curious respecting his Biographer Moore, and his *dear friend* Sir John Hobhouse, to which I refer those who may interest themselves in such matters, being here omitted as somewhat extraneous. Fortunate it was for Byron that he had Shelley for a friend and fosterer of his genius. How much does not the world owe to the noble poet's emancipation from the fetters of Hobhouse and release from the leaden mantle of his paralysing [*sic*] dulness.

Several of our countrymen beside the Williams's swelled Shelley's and Byron's Circle during the winter. There are some memoirs published by Colburn which appeared

Campbell, and a crowd whom I did not know. . . . Monckton Milnes asked which we thought Campbell's best poem. Macaulay said *The Pleasures of Hope* was a good prize poem, *Gertrude of Wyoming* was better, but the Odes were his masterpiece. Milnes said they were only songs or ballads, and said this so loud that Macaulay stopped him. We talked of the man himself, and said what was true of his personal character. Macaulay repeated Byron's lines in *Don Juan* in reference to *Gertrude of Wyoming*—

The bard I quote from does not sing amiss;
and so we went on some time."

The Hobhouse record includes a sharp criticism of the disorder and defective management which really characterized a ceremonial described by the newspapers as "most solemn, decorous, and affecting". Sir John adds—"but what I saw I set down." Of Campbell he says: "I do not think any one knew him much better than myself, and what I know of him does not at all tally with the eulogies now passed upon his character; I mean as a social man. He was vain, captious, uncertain, exceed-

ingly suspicious, and had nothing in his general conversation either amusing or instructive. But he was, through life, a very poor man, which will account for many of these infirmities, and that he had qualities of a high character cannot be denied. As a poet, if not the first, he is in the very first line. Byron could not have written the *Mariners of England*, *Hohenlinden*, or *Copenhagen*, any more than Campbell could have written *Childe Harold*; but in the effect produced on the taste and style of their contemporaries the two cannot be compared. Byron is incomparably the greater of the two. I cannot help feeling more indignant than ever at the exclusion of my friend's monument from those precincts which record the remains of his not superior rival, but I am powerless in this respect."

This reads a little like what Mr. Spooner would call "praising with faint damns"; but really the two literary foes here brought face to face—Medwin and Hobhouse—were both dissatisfied with the village church of Hucknall Torkard near Nottingham as a substitute for Westminster Abbey.

at this time said to be by the pen of Mr. Velvet-cushion Cunningham, a particular friend of Lady Byron, and who doubtless furnished her quota of the *matter*, in which Byron and this little *coterie* were compared to Frederick the Great, and those wits that took refuge in his Court, viz. Voltaire, the Marquis D'Argent, &c. ; and the object of which coterie, the memoir-writer contends, was to infidelize the world—Shelley being made the Coryphæus. The author was grossly mistaken; their object was very different. Most of them came to Pisa by accident, and their stay in that city was protracted by the pleasure of Byron's and Shelley's society; for both were very social, and the noble poet's morning *Conversazioni* and delightful dinners no small attraction. The reverend gentleman, however, one of the forty annotators, inveighs loudly against the Satanic school with "a forty-parson power." Nor was he the only one of his brethren who attacked it and them, for a clergyman at Kentish Town¹ treated his congregation with two sermons against *Cain*, (that had just appeared,) and there was a third at Pisa who followed in his wake. "Scoundrels of priests," observes Lord Byron. "who do more harm to religion than all the infidels who ever forgot their catechism." But the preaching at Pisa was directed as much or more against Shelley, than his noble friend, and thereby hangs a tale.

In the same house on the Lung' Arno, where Shelley had taken up his abode, lived (well-known by his *Life of Surrey*, most of the materials of which he had surreptitiously obtained by sucking the brains of Bishop Percy,

¹ Byron wrote to Murray that the parsons were all preaching at *Cain*, "from Kentish Town to Pisa," adding the passage quoted by Medwin from Moore's *Life &c.* The

Kentish Town gentleman is said to have been "the Rev. Johnstone Grant, who preached against *Cain* in the Chapel there" (*Fraser's Magazine*, March 1833, p. 341).

who always expressed himself indignant thereat, for his secretary, from whom I have these particulars, was at that time himself engaged in the undertaking,) Dr. Nott. This divine was, I believe, a Prebend of Winchester, and as his architectural knowledge was profound, the cathedral is much indebted to him for its judicious improvements and restorations. These and other acquirements obtained for him the appointment of sub-preceptor to the Princess Charlotte, which situation, from his over-anxiety to become (what every prebend and dean of the church invariably does) a bishop, and some coquetting with his royal pupil, whom he persuaded to recommend him by a codicil to her will, for a father-in-Godship, in case of accidents, lost him his office. So at least runs the story, but whether founded on good authority I do not mean to affirm. It might be held sufficient ground to relieve him from his sub-preceptorial duties, that he had published Surrey's amatory verses, which, if not improper in themselves, were rather unfit to place in the hands of the young princess his pupil; so that this expensive edition, that only got into great libraries, and could have had a very limited circulation, proved in all ways an unprofitable speculation to the learned Doctor. He had also been, if he had now ceased to be, "a gay deceiver," and had obtained for himself, by his backing out of more than one matrimonial engagement, the *soubriquet* of Slip-knot (Nott). "Most unfortunate," Byron used to say, "was the man who had a name that could be punned upon;" and when he heard of what I am about to detail, said, "that the preacher read some of the commandments affirmatively and not negatively, as "Thou shalt, Nott! (not) bear false witness against thy neighbour, &c." The circumstance to which I allude, and that excited Lord Byron's bile, is this: He opened a chapel in

his own apartment, and preached a trilogy of sermons against Atheism, Mrs. Shelley forming one of the congregation, and his eyes being directed on her with a significant expression, and as his whole flock did not consist of more than fourteen or fifteen, it was evident the Doctor was preaching *at*, and not *to* some of it. These discourses came to Byron's ears, and though Shelley laughed at the malice of the Doctor, the noble bard was indignant at the prostitution of his pulpit, and still more so when he heard that the divine had at Mrs. Beauclerc's called Shelley a "*Scelerato*," which no doubt was deemed very witty. The day after, Byron wrote a little biting satire, a song to the tune of *The Vicar and Moses*, which has appeared in a Periodical, and as it is not to be found in any of his collected works,¹ I shall give as correctly copied by me, by permission of the bard; premising that it was supplied to Colburn for the *Conversations*, but thought by him *trop fort*. Magazines are like ephemerides, only born to perish. They have the fame of their month, and are forgotten;

¹ This negative is not quite true. Mr. Coleridge says in his edition of Byron's Poetry (Vol. vii, 1904, p. 80) that it was first published in Galignani's edition of Byron's Works, in 1831. He does not *per contra*, mention the version published in *Fraser's Magazine* (in March 1833). No doubt the thing was touched up by Byron from day to day; and I should say that all three versions are on the whole genuine variants. It is to be regretted that Medwin and *Fraser* were not both duly collated for the standard edition, which contains the only utterly condemnable reading in the whole lot, namely—

Have long ago suffered censure,
which I should regard as a Galignanian corruption, if, indeed, Mr. Coleridge follows Galignani. *Fraser* prints the line—

Have long ago suffered erasure.
Possibly the terminal word was *effacure* when Medwin made his copy; but it is a bad word; and if Byron found, when he trotted his lampoon out in the Pisan circle, that no one pronounced it *effasure* or otherwise than *effakure*, he would naturally alter it to *erasure*. The production is very poor for Byron, even with all the best readings selected from the three texts. As to the Dr., whatever be the facts of the Princess Charlotte scandal, he was not a man to be wholly ignored in surveying English literature. Apart from his edition of Surrey and Wyatt, which had a certain vogue, his anonymously published edition and translation of Catullus is a book which I for one should be sorry to miss from my library.

but nothing from the pen of Byron should be permitted to die. The *nil nisi bonum de mortuis* is a proverb, with many others, more honoured in the breach than the observance. At all events, I feel no qualm of conscience in branding a reverend lampooner, and deem it an act of justice to the memory of Shelley so to do.

SONG.

(*To the tune of the Vicar and Moses.*)

Do you know Doctor Nott,
 With "a crook in his lot,"
 Who several years since tried to dish up
 A neat codicil
 To the Princess's will,
 Which made Doctor Nott not a bishop?
 So the Doctor being found
 A little unsound
 To [*sic* for *In*] his doctrines, at least as a teacher
 And kicked from one stool
 As a knave and a fool,
 Has mounted another as preacher.
 In that gown, like a skin
 With *no lion* within,
 He still for the bench would be driving,
 And roareth away,
 A true "Vicar of Bray,"
 Except that his *bray* lost his *living*.
 'Gainst freethinkers, he roars,
 You should all shut your doors,
 Or be "bound" in the "devil's indentures;"
 And here I agree,
 For who ever would be
 A guest, where old Simony enters?
 Let the priest who beguiled
 His sovereign's child,
 To his own dirty views of promotion,
 Wear his sheep's clothing still,
 Among flocks to his will,
 And dishonour the cause of devotion.

The altar and throne
 Are in peril alone
 From such as himself, who would render
 The altar itself
 A shop let to pelf,*
 And pray God to pay his defender.

But Doctor ! one word,
 Which perhaps you have heard,—
 They should never throw stones, who have windows
 Of glass to be broken,
 And by that same token,
 As a sinner, *you* can't blame what sin does.

But perhaps you do well—
 Your own windows, they tell,
 Have long ago suffered effacure,†
 Not a fragment remains
 Of your character's panes,
 Since the Regent refused you a glazier.

Though your visions of lawn
 Have all been withdrawn,‡
 And you missed your bold stroke for a mitre,
 In a little snug way,
 You may still preach and pray,
 And from bishop, sink into backbiter.

Disagreeable as it must have been to Mrs. Shelley, to be an inmate of the same house with this licensed libeller, it must be confessed, as I have already stated, that Shelley was but little affected by his preaching ; but his hatred and horror of fanaticism shewed itself a short time after, on an occasion that soon occurred to awaken all his sympathies. One day when I called at the bookseller Moloni's. I heard a report that a subject of Lucca had been condemned to be burnt alive for sacrilege. A priest who shortly after entered, confirmed the news, and expressed himself in the

* A misprint in Fraser.—*A step but to pelf.*

† *Effacure* for *erasure*.

‡ *Have been lately withdrawn.*

following terms:—"Wretch!" said he, "he took the consecrated wafers from the altar, and threw them contemptuously about the church. No tortures can be great enough for such a horrible crime; burning is too light a death. I will go to Lucca, I would go to Spain to see the infidel die at the stake." Such were the *humane* and *charitable* feelings of a follower of Christ. I left him with abhorrence, and betook myself to Lord Byron. "Is it possible," said he, with shuddering, "do we live in the nineteenth century? But I can believe anything of the Duchess of Lucca. She was an Infanta—is a bigot, and perhaps an advocate for the Inquisition. But surely she cannot venture in these times to sign a warrant for such an execution! We must endeavour to prevent this *auto da fé*. Lord Guildford is here. We will move heaven and earth to put a stop to it. The Grand Duke of Tuscany will surely appeal against the consummation of such a horrible sacrifice, for he has not signed a death-warrant since he came to the throne."

At this moment Shelley entered. He had also heard that the offender was to be burnt the next day. He proposed that we should arm ourselves as well as we could, and immediately ride to Lucca, and attempt on the morrow to rescue the prisoner when brought to the stake, and then carry him to the Tuscan frontier, where he would be safe. Mad and hopeless as the plan was, Lord Byron, carried away by Shelley's enthusiasm, declared himself ready to join in it, should other means fail. We agreed to meet again in the evening, and in the meanwhile to make a representation, signed by all the English at Pisa, to the Grand Duke, then with his Court at Pisa.

Moore in his *Life* gives the following account of this transaction, contained in a letter to him.

" * * * [meaning Taafe,] is gone with his broken head to Lucca, at my desire, to try and save a man from being burnt. The Spanish * * * [Duchess,] that has her petticoats thrown over Lucca, had actually condemned a poor devil to the stake, for stealing a wafer-box out of a church. Shelley and I were up in arms against this piece of piety, and have been disturbing everybody to get the sentence changed. * * * [Taafe] is gone to see what can be done."

"To Mr. Shelley.

"December 12th, 1821.

"My dear Shelley,

"Enclosed is a note for you from * * * [Taafe]. His reasons are all very true, I dare say; and it might, and it may be of personal inconvenience to us. But that does not appear to me to be a reason to allow a being to be burnt, without trying to save him,—to save him by any means; but *remonstrance* is of course out of the question, but I do not see how a temperate remonstrance can hurt any one. Lord Guildford is the man, if he would undertake it. He knows the Grand Duke personally, and might perhaps prevail on him to interfere. But as he goes to-morrow, you must be quick, or it will be useless. Make any use of my name you please.

"Yours ever,

"B———."

"To Mr. Moore.

"I send you the two notes, which will tell you the story I allude to, of the *auto da fé*. Shelley's allusion to "his fellow serpent," is a buffoonery of mine. Göthe's Mephistopholes calls the serpent who tempted Eve, "my aunt, the renowned snake;" and I always insist that Shelley is nothing but one of her nephews, walking about on the tip of his tail.

"BYRON."

"To Lord Byron.

"Two o'clock, Tuesday morning.

"My dear Lord,

"Although strongly persuaded that the story must be either an entire fabrication, or so gross an exaggeration as to be nearly so; yet in order to be able to discover the truth beyond all doubt, and to set your mind quite at rest, I have taken the determination to go myself to Lucca this morning. Should it prove less false than I am convinced it is, I will not fail to exert myself in every way that I can imagine may have any success. Be assured of this.

"Your Lordship's most truly,

"* * * " [TAAFFE.]

"P.S.—To prevent *bavardage*, I prefer going in person to sending my servant with a letter. It is better for you to mention nothing (except of course to Shelley) of my excursion. The person I visit there is one on whom I can have every dependence in every way, both as to authority and truth."

"To Lord Byron.

"Thursday morning.

"My dear Lord Byron,

"I hear this morning that the design which certainly had been in contemplation, of burning my 'fellow serpent,' has been abandoned, and that he has been condemned to the galleys. Lord Guildford is at Leghorn, and as your courier applied to me to know whether he ought to leave your letter for him or not, I have thought it best, since this information, to tell him to take it back.

"Ever faithfully yours,

"P. B. SHELLEY."

The concluding part of this correspondence shews that I was mistaken in saying in the *Conversations*, that Shelley had applied to Lord Guildford; but the information respecting the culprit's being at that time condemned to the galleys, was (for the course of justice in Italy is not so speedy,) incorrect. The Duchess had issued a proclamation, that the offender, if arrested, should be subject to the Spanish laws; but he had escaped to Florence, and delivered himself up to the police, who had not made him over to the Lucchese authorities, but on condition that he should be tried by the statutes of Tuscany. I must not omit to mention that Shelley proposed in case the *Auto da Fé* should take place, that we should ride well armed to Lucca, and endeavour to rescue the Victim from the Stake.¹

I have mentioned Mrs. Beauclerc, a neighbour of Shelley's family in Sussex, to whom I alluded in the *Conversations*. She was a daughter of the Duchess of Leinster, by her second marriage, and half-sister to Lord

¹ This sentence is one of the late additions; but he had already "mentioned" &c. See page 365, *ante*.

Edward Fitzgerald, whose papers relative to the rebellion, previous to his arrest, were placed in her hands, and I imagine given by her to Moore for his Life of that infatuated and ill-fated patriot. Shelley found a great charm in her acquaintance, for no one, from her intercourse with the great world, and the leading personages of her time, had a more copious fund of anecdote. She was indeed a person of first-rate talents and acquirements, possessed an *esprit de société* [*sic*] quite unique, and her house, which she opened every evening, was a never-failing resource. Byron and Mrs. Beauclerc wished mutually to be acquainted, and I was requested by both to be the medium of introduction, during a ride, in which they were, to save formality, to meet as by accident. Lady Blessington has mentioned Byron's superstition as to days, and I have said that he objected to a Friday as that of the meeting. But, notwithstanding, it was fated that this introduction should not be attended with any harmonious results. Byron, after it, called, but was not let in. He thought himself slighted, and took her not "being at home" as a mortal affront, and would accept no after-excuses. A correspondence ensued between them, which I applied to her for, but she did not wish to have it published. Her apologies failed to soothe the Poet's *amour propre*, and he was inexorable. On the occasion of her eldest daughter's birth-day, she had invited Professor Rossini [*sic*], who on the evening of the fête, sent the following lines as an excuse, which that lady deemed a very ambiguous compliment, and referred them to Shelley and Lord Byron, who both thought they could not have been intended as an affront. I give the verses and a translation, premising that no one wrote more elegant *vers de société* [*sic*] than the now well-known author.

A LA SIGNORA B.

Della tua cara Aglaia,
 Fra i danzi e i conviti,
 Oggi il natal a celebrar m'inviti;
 Bella Emilia errasti,
 Si non d'April spirò la tepid'ora,
 Delle Grazie il natal non e' venut' ancora.

TO MRS. B.

To greet thy dear Aglaia's natal day,
 With festive honours due to it and her,
 Emilia! you invite me to your home!
 Beautiful mother! sure you err!
 Till shall have breathed the genial hour of May,
 The birthday of the Graces is not come.

Mrs. Beauclerc consoled herself with Mrs. Shelley's and Shelley's society, and the grace and ease of his manners and playful converse were the constant themes of her admiration, and she often told me she wished to have seen more of him. In her estimate of Shelley, she agreed with Byron, who says to one of his detractors,—“ You do not know how good, how mild, how tolerant he was in society, and as perfect a gentleman as ever crossed a drawing-room, when he liked, and was ¹ liked;” and in a letter to Moore, he says,—“ Shelley, who is another bugbear to you and the world, is to my knowledge the least selfish, and the mildest of men,—a man who has made more sacrifices to his fortune and feelings than any I have ever heard of. With his speculative opinions I have nothing in common, nor desire to have.” And yet, notwithstanding these private testimonials to his worth, Lord Byron, in some preface or note of his on which I cannot lay my hand, where he enumerates those friends whom he had met, or made, abroad, does not include Shelley among the number;

¹ I know no authority for this right. See foot-note on pp. 428 and reading; but the sense is probably 429 *post*.

and moreover says, that the sooner any other acquaintance whom he has made on the continent should cease, so much the better. I quote from memory, but it is the tenor of his words. How unmanly and unworthy a truckling to Hobhouse, Moore, &c., who did not like to have their names coupled with Shelley's in the same sentence! what servile deference to the opinion of the world!!

The Counts Gamba and Pietro, the father and brother of the Countess Guiccioli, formed also an addition to Shelley's circle. The former was a plain country gentleman, retired and simple in his manners, and of a melancholy and taciturnity natural to an exile, of his age, from his own country, which none love so ardently as the Italians. The passion of the younger Foscoli¹ for Venice is by no means overcharged. Pietro was, as Lady Blessington says, an amiable man, and was adored by his sister. The last time I saw him was at Genoa, shortly after Shelley's death, whither he had preceded Lord Byron, having been sent out of Tuscany, for some affray with one of the noble lord's retainers; and I may here add that he afterwards accompanied him to Greece, and brought home Byron's remains; on which occasion Mr. Hobhouse stood godfather to a work of his on Byron of little merit, or interest.² He was a man of no talent, but pleasing and

¹ Obviously the name should be *Foscari*. It is on record that Byron had occasion to rebut a charge that the Son in the tragedy of *The Two Foscari* was overdrawn in respect of his passion for the city of Venice.

² No doubt this ill-natured reference is to *A Narrative of Lord Byron's Last Journey to Greece, Extracted from the journal of Count Peter Gamba, who attended his Lordship on that Expedition.* (London, Murray, octavo, 1825.) In Lord Broughton's *Recollections of*

a Long Life as edited by Lady Dorchester, Vol. iii, p. 227 (1810), we read—"I wrote to Moore informing him that I had expunged a passage in Count Gamba's narrative which I thought might annoy him; and then I asked him, half jocularly, whether he was not ashamed of himself for writing letters to Byron in an unfriendly tone respecting myself. Moore answered me by saying that he had performed the same service for me, by expunging something in a

agreeable, and carried with him the passport of a very handsome person. There was also at Pisa this winter, a Baron Lutzerode, one of the chamberlains of one of the Princes of Saxe, then on a visit to the Grand Duke. This German baron, to whom it may be remembered Byron gave an impression of a sentimental seal and his autograph, was not unfrequently at Shelley's. He would be a poet, and had written a poem entitled *The Swan Song of the Priest-Murderer*, which he wished Shelley much to translate, and which, with his good nature and love of obliging, he one day did attempt, but found the task not to be accomplished. Shelley used to laugh heartily at the strange title.

During the carnival, we took, in conjunction with Lord Byron, a box at the opera, but he never frequented it, nor the Countess Guiccioli, who devoted her evenings to her father, and did not join in any public amusements. Shelley sometimes assisted at the representation, for he was very partial to music. Sinclair, the celebrated tenor, had an engagement, and electrified the house in the duo (I forget the name of the opera) of—

Cio che tu brami, Io bramo,
Non aviam che un' cuore.

letter from Byron reflecting upon me, so that we were quits in that respect, and might open a new account with one another. I answered that we were not at all quits on the old score. I begged him, by all means, to restore the expunged passage." Lady Dorchester has added as an Appendix to this third volume a translation made by her father in 1824 from an interesting letter in Italian written by Count Pietro Gamba to Mrs. Leigh. It gives that unhappy lady a very feeling account of her illustrious brother's last illness and

death. With this document students of the life and writings of Byron were already familiar; or, if they were not, it was their fault rather than their misfortune. It was printed from a manuscript in the British Museum (31,037, f. 45) in Appendix VII to the Sixth Volume of Byron's Letters and Journals edited by Mr. Rowland Prothero and issued by Mr. Murray in 1901. It was doubtless through inadvertence that Lady Dorchester ignored this fact, and gave the letter as now (April 1910) "published for the first time."

But his pronunciation was bad, and his acting, like Braham's, very indifferent, as is the case with many singers. His voice possessed a wonderful sweetness and melody, though not much compass, but in a private room, where we sometimes heard him at Mrs. Beauclerc's, he was delightful. He was able to appreciate, and used to speak in raptures of Shelley's Lyrics, and thought them highly adapted to be set to music, and was desirous of doing so ; but whether he carried his design into execution, I know not, tho' very many of Shelley's Lyrical pieces have been set to music, particularly the beautiful Lines to Mrs. Williams beginning with

The keen Stars are twinkling,
And the Moon rising brightly among them,
Dear Jane ! *

Mrs. Williams, who was an accomplished singer, and player on the harp, guitar, and piano, greatly added to the charm of our *soirees* [*sic*], sometimes varied by "*bout-rimés*." On one occasion, I remember a remarkable instance of Shelley's facility and exercise of imagination. A word was chosen, and all the rhymes to it in the language, and they were very numerous, set down, without regard to their corresponding meanings, and in a few minutes he filled in the blanks with a beautifully fanciful poem, which, probably, no one preserved, though now I should highly prize such a relic !

I passed much of my time in Shelley's domestic circle, dining with him most days. He was, as I have said, most abstemious in his diet,—utterly indifferent to the luxuries of the table, and, although he had been obliged for his

* At Fox's chapel, in Finsbury, I heard two of Shelley's sublime effusions in praise of Liberty, Virtue, and Love, sung, as set to hymns. *Tempora mutantur.*

health to discontinue his Pythagorean system, he still almost lived on bread, fruit, and vegetables. Wine, like Hazlitt, he never touched with his lips; Hazlitt had abandoned it from a vow, having once injured his constitution by excess; but as to Shelley, it would have been too exciting for his brain. He was essentially a water-drinker, and his choice of Pisa, and his continuance there, had been, and were directed, as I have said, by its purity, —the stream being brought from the mountains many miles distant, by the picturesque aqueduct that crosses the plain from above the Baths of St. Julian. Shelley was a man of the nicest habits,—the most scrupulous nicety in his person; invariably, whatever might be his occupation, making his toilette for dinner, during the interval between which he wrote his letters on his knees. His correspondents, as may be seen by the second volume of his Prose Works, were not numerous, indeed his Letters, published by Mrs. Shelley and running through more than four years, were addressed to only as many individuals.¹ His pen flowed on with extraordinary rapidity on these occasions, and without a moment's pause, his mind was mirrored on the paper—and beautiful, indeed, was his epistolary style, nor less bold and beautiful his handwriting, which is said by some to be a distinguishing mark of character. His hand was very early formed, and never altered,—as appears by the autograph of a letter in my possession written when he was ten years of age, contained in appendix to Vol. I. It was a very bold and free and peculiar hand, and it surprizes me that the late forgeries of his Letters published by Mr. Moxon should have been undetected—a Mr. George Gordon Byron wrote to me some years ago telling me that he had many

¹ There are ten correspondents.

letters of Shelley's and invited me to go down to Greenwich where he was residing in order to peruse them.¹ I have seen no announcement of their publication. At other times, he would read what Mrs. Shelley had been writing during the day, in whose progress he took great delight and interest, now and then altering in pencil a word. She was then engaged in her novel of *Castruccio*, afterwards called *Valperga*, a title substituted for the first by Godwin, for whose benefit it was designed, and produced, it appears, £400,—at least that sum had been offered by Ollier, Shelley's publisher, who estimated at that high price the fame of the author of *Frankenstein*. That was "*the Golden age*" of novelists; but *Valperga* was a talented work, full of eloquence and beauty and poetry, lost on the world of readers of fiction, as a favourite dramatist told me good writing was for the stage, and as much militating against its success with the public. It is true that eloquence and poetry are not all that is required in Novels—and what Mrs. Shelley has always failed in is delineation of character—and dialogue—; she had not seen enough of the world—or mixed enough in society to anatomize mankind.

During dinner, he almost invariably had a book by his side. In respect of the table, he differed from Byron, who was in his heart a *bon vivant*, and only mortified his palate from a fear of getting fat, in which he ultimately succeeded to his heart's desire, for, at Genoa, he had become skeletonly thin, as may be seen by a *silhouette* of Mrs. Hunt's, and Lady Blessington's description of his person, which she compares to that of an overgrown

¹ It is strange that Medwin did not put two and two together and suggest that his correspondent was, as now generally believed, the forger of the Moxon spurious

letters. Had he accepted that invitation he might have discovered and exposed the fraud before Browning wrote his introduction to the suppressed book of 1852.

schoolboy. Occasionally Mrs. Shelley used to read with the Grand Duchess, and, some years afterwards, at the Court of Florence, the duchess spoke of her to me in the kindest terms, and of Shelley, with whose writings she seemed familiar, and said she thought him unjustly calumniated, for he had left behind him at Pisa the memory of his virtues and benevolence. To Byron the Duchess made no allusion. She remembered the affair of Sergeant-major Masi. But speaking of dinners, I must not forget to mention those of Byron, and which, though Shelley did no justice to their good fare, he enjoyed as much as any of the party. At one of these repasts, or rather before dinner, as we were sitting in his studio, the conversation happening to turn on longevity, Byron offered Shelley a bet of £1000 on that of Lady Noel against Sir Timothy Shelley's, and which wager Shelley at once accepted. Not many weeks had elapsed, when her ladyship died, and we all thought that Byron would have paid the debt, or at least have offered to pay it—but he neither did one nor the other. It is my decided opinion that Shelley would have refused to receive the money, but it ought to have been proffered; and I have little doubt that had the baronet died the first, Shelley would have acted differently. That Byron would have taken the sum of course no one can say. Williams (who with two other English gentlemen, was present,) was highly indignant at, and disgusted with Lord Byron, and never afterwards entered his doors,—a circumstance Byron lamented to me, for he knew him to be a highly honourable and gentlemanly man; saying, “he could not conceive the reason of his avoiding him!” I mentioned in my memoir of Shelley, which appeared in *The Athenæum*, the circumstance of this bet, and an anonymous writer

questioned it by saying, that it was recorded in Moore's Life that Lord Byron *did* pay a bet to Captain Hay of £50. Had a similar wager been laid with, and lost to the same gentleman, there is no question what the result would have been,—Lord Byron would have acted as he did in 18—.

But Byron's mystifications were not confined to his contemporaries. I have a note of a conversation which escaped me, with him and Shelley on Dante. When it suited Byron's purpose in defence of his *Prophecy of Dante*, (see Moore's Life, p. 123,) he could talk a very different language; though the expression of the opinions here orally detailed, correspond with the sentiments contained in a note to *Don Juan*.

"*The Divine Comedy*," said he, "is a scientific treatise of some theological student, one moment treating of angels, and the next of demons, far the most interesting personages in his Drama; shewing that he had a better conception of Hell than Heaven; in fact, the Inferno is the only one of the trilogy that is read. It is true," he added, "it might have pleased his contemporaries, and been sung about the streets, as were the poems of Homer; but at the present day, either human nature is very much changed, or the poem is so obscure, tiresome, and insupportable, that no one can read it for half-an-hour together without yawning, and going to sleep over it like Malagigi; and the hundred times I have made the attempt to read it, I have lost my labour. If we except the 'Pecchie chi uscino del chiuso,'—the simile, 'Come d'autunno si levan le foglie,'—the Francesca di Rimini, the words, 'Colore oscuro,' &c., inscribed on the portal of Hell,—the Death of Ugolino—the 'Si volge all' aqua,' &c., and a dozen other passages, what is the rest of this very comic *Divine Comedy*? 'A great poem!' you call it; a great poem indeed! *That* should have a uniformity of design, a combination of parts, all contributing to the development of the whole. The action should go on increasing in beauty and power and interest.

"Has the *Divina Commedia* any of these characteristics? Who can read with patience, fourteen thousand lines, made up of prayers, dialogues, and questions, without sticking fast in the bogs and quicksands, and losing his way in the thousand turns and wind-

ings of the inextricable labyrinths of his three-times-nine circles? and of these fourteen thousand lines, more than two-thirds are, by the confession of Fregoni, Algarotti, and Bettinello, defective and bad*; and yet, despite of this, the Italians carry their pedantry and national pride to such a length, as to set up Dante as the standard of perfection, to consider Dante as made for all time; and think, as Leigh Hunt and the Cockneys do of Shakspeare, that the language came to a stand-still with the god of their idolatry, and want to go back to him."

That Shelley did not agree with Lord Byron in this criticism, I need scarcely observe. He admitted, however, as already recorded, that the *Divine Comedy* was a misty and extravagant fiction, and redeemed only by its "Fortunate Isles, laden with golden fruit." "But," said he, "remember the time in which he wrote. He was a giant.

Quel signor del' altissimo canto,
Chi sovra gli altri come aquila vola.

Read the *Paradiso*, and parts of the *Purgatorio*, especially the meeting with Matilda."

He afterwards told me that the more he read Dante, he the more admired him.

He says in one of his Letters,¹ that he excelled all poets, except Shakspeare, in tenderness, sublimity, and ideal beauty. In his *Defence of Poetry*, Shelley calls the Apotheosis of Beatrice in the *Paradiso*, and the gradations

* I saw at Pickering's a copy of the *Divina Commedia* which had been prepared by Ugo Foscolo for publication. There were hundreds and hundreds of lines which with incredible labour and ingenuity had been emended by that eccentric, and unfortunate Poet.

¹ In the revised copy Medwin struck out the reference "page 225," the occurrence of which in the printed book confirms the supposition that he was using the original two-volume edition of the *Essays, Letters, &c.* Of course a reference to that or any edition of Shelley's Letters, reveals a misquotation. Shelley says "exquisite tenderness, and sensibility [not sublimity], and ideal beauty." It is in the letter to Hunt of September 3, 1819.

of his own love and her loveliness, by which, as by steps. he figures himself to have ascended to the throne of the Supreme Cause, as the most glowing images of modern poetry; calls the *Paradiso* a perfect hymn of everlasting love, and the poetry of Dante the bridge thrown over the stream of time, which unites the modern and ancient world. Nay, more, he admired Dante as the first reformer, and classes him with Luther, calling him the first awakener of Europe, and the creator of a language in itself music.

It was during the latter part of my stay at Pisa, that Byron formed his design of building a yacht. Shelley, whom he consulted in all his private affairs, settled the price of the vessel, to be built under the superintendence of the naval architect of the *Darsena* at Genoa. His own passion for boating, already strong enough, was doubly excited by this idea of Byron's. Williams contributed also to foster the passion, and being acquainted with Captain Roberts, (the son of the celebrated Roberts, who commanded one of Capt. Cook's ships in his voyage round the world,) corresponded with him on the subject, and the consequence was, that a schooner, but on a much smaller scale, was ordered. The shape of the boat, modelled after one of the man-of-war boats in the dock-yard, with some variations in the build, was at length approved of. Her dimensions were to be twenty-four feet long, eight broad, and draught four feet of water. She was a beautiful craft on paper, but to my mind far from safe, for her ballast, two tons of lead, was to be let into her keel. Any one acquainted with boating, must know that the only good ballast is live ballast, as it is called,—water casks, that can be shifted starboard or larboard, according to the heeling of the vessel, and which, in cases of emergency, can be

thrown overboard to lighten her ; a ballast indeed that scarcely requires this, for it will float. I need not enlarge on this topic, but how far my criticism was justified by the event, will soon appear.

After a parting dinner given me by Byron, I took leave of my friends, with a promise of seeing them in the summer. Williams seemed to me in a rapid decline, but Shelley's health was wonderfully improved, and he exhibited no symptoms of any disease that caused apprehension. His spirits, too, were comparatively good, and he was looking forward—*that* gave a stimulus to them—to the arrival of Leigh Hunt, of whom he frequently spoke with the warmest regard, and often took a delight in looking at a portrait of him, which he had received during my first visit.

A few days from my arrival at Rome, on the 20th March, there had occurred a circumstance at Pisa, which caused a great sensation among the English,—ever ready and willing to believe anything *against* Lord Byron,—owing to a mis-statement of the facts in the *Courier Français*, and several other papers, among the rest *Galignani's Messenger*, in which it was stated, that in a quarrel between Lord Byron and an officer of dragoons, a servant of Lord Byron's had stabbed him, and that he had died of his wounds. This story, though I did not credit it, greatly annoyed me, and I immediately wrote to Lord Byron for the particulars, in order that I might contradict it from authority ; in answer to which he sent me by return of post the affidavits of Shelley and the rest of the party present, who it seems had been grossly insulted, not by an officer, but one Sergeant-major Masi, who, though they were unarmed, struck some of them with his sabre, especially Shelley, who received a cut on

his head that felled him from his horse. According to another affidavit of Mr. Crawford, "as they were all riding together after this rencontre, on the Lung' Arno, where a crowd was collected, high words passing between Lord Byron and the Sergeant-major, who was about to cut him down with his sword, Lord Byron's servants, who were waiting for their master at the door of the Lanfranchi palace, dragged the aggressor off his horse into the hall, and then one of them slightly wounded him with a pitchfork." Mr. Moore seems to have suppressed Lord Byron's letters on this subject, on which he could not have failed to have written. The tranquillity at Pisa, owing to this unlucky squabble, had been much disturbed, not only by anxiety about the life of the sergeant-major, but by the many sinister reports and suspicions, however ill-founded, to which that affair gave rise. Although the wounded man recovered, his friends vowed vengeance with the dagger, not only on Lord Byron, but on Shelley, and all the English who had formed the cavalcade. The judicial enquiry too was most annoying; all Lord Byron's servants, except the coachman, were arrested, but no evidence being adduced against them, they were released.

Lord Byron was advised by the police to quit Pisa for a time. He complied, and took a villa at Monte Nero, near Leghorn; but after a six weeks abode there returned to the Casa Lanfranchi.

Lord Byron, naturally kind and benevolent, treated his domestics less like menials than equals, and hence the zeal, which, after the manner of the Italian retainers of old, often, as on this occasion, overstepped the bounds of devotion, they displayed. The Tuscan police are not very remarkable for clear-sightedness, and overlooked the right culprit. Some years afterwards, when I was at Sienna,

a mendicant with a wooden leg, who was begging his way to Rome, his native city, called on me for alms, and when I had given him a trifle, said,—“Do you not remember me? I was Lord Byron’s coachman at Pisa, and used to drive you and Signor Shelley every day to the Contadino’s.”

The man was so much changed, that it was some time before I could recognise his features; but at length did so, and after some conversation, he confessed with all the pride of a Guelph or Ghibelline, that he had avenged his master’s insult.

Some years after, I related to the Countess Guiccioli, at Florence, this anecdote, and she told me that a man answering my description had also called on her, but that she thought him an impostor. He, however, told me so many things which could only be known by an individual in Lord Byron’s service, that I entertain no doubt of his identity. He spoke of Shelley’s being at Ravenna before his lord’s departure, of the fondness of little Allegra for Shelley, her being sent to the convent at Ravenna, and I know not what besides, respecting his master’s Franciscas and Katinkas, who have been immortalised in the page of Moore, and with their portraits so splendidly engraved, will go down to posterity with the Fornarina.

But to return to Shelley.—He, after my departure from Pisa, had employed himself in translating some scenes of Faust, being led thereto by Retsch’s Outlines, of which he says,—¹

¹ The extract is from Shelley’s letter of the 10th of April 1822 to John Gisborne. The word *satisfied* in the first line should be *satiated*; and there are other trifling inaccuracies, such as *What etchings!* for *What etchings those are!* The next

extract is from the same letter, and precedes the passage about the etchings. The letter can be consulted in my edition of Shelley’s Prose Works (Vol. iv) or in Mr. Ingpen’s Collection of Shelley’s Letters.

"What etchings! I am never satisfied with looking at them, and I fear it is the only sort of translation of which *Faust* is susceptible. I never perfectly understood the Hartz mountain scene until I saw the etching; and then Margaret in the summer house with *Faust*! The artist makes me envy his happiness, that he can sketch such things with calmness, which I only dare look upon once, and which made my brain swim round, only to touch the leaf on the opposite side of which I knew it was figured. Whether it be that the artist has surpassed *Faust*, or that the pencil surpasses language in some subjects, I know not; or that I am more affected by a visible image, but the etching certainly excited me far more than the poem it illustrated." "Do you remember," he adds, "the 54th Letter of the first part of *La Nouvelle Heloise*? Göthe in a subsequent scene undoubtedly had that letter in his mind, and this etching is an idealism of it. So much for the world of shadows!"

Shelley also found, as already mentioned in the *Conversations*, (for what Byron said there was derived from him,) a striking resemblance between *Faust* and Cypriano, and says in one of his letters,—

"If I were to acknowledge Coleridge's distinction, I should say Göthe was the greater philosopher, and Calderon the greater poet. Cyprian evidently furnished the germ of *Faust*, as *Faust** may furnish the germ of other poems, although it is as different from it in the structure as the acorn is from the oak. I have, imagine my presumption, translated several scenes from both, as the basis of a paper for our journal. I am," he adds, "well content with those from Calderon, which, in fact, gave me but little trouble, but those from *Faust* I feel how imperfect a representation, even with all the licence I assume to figure to myself how Göthe would have written in English, my words convey. No one but Coleridge is capable of the work."

* Göthe in his *Conversations with Eckerman*[n] and Soret says that I had never read much less did I think of it while I was writing *Faust*.¹

¹ This ludicrously expressed note seems to mean that the *Conversations* represent Goethe as saying that he had never read Calderon's drama. Without an exact reference I should be loth to record my belief in this statement of Medwin's, especially as Lewes does not bring the great

German's denial forward in his *Life of Goethe* when discussing at some length the dissimilarity of *Faust* and *El Magico*. It is much more likely that Medwin was wrong than that Lewes either wilfully or accidentally ignored so important an avowal on Goethe's part.

These scenes of Shelley's, which were originally destined for the new publication, afterwards appeared in *The Liberal*. The translation has been unmercifully handled by Mr. Hayward. Of our gifted poet's Prologue in Heaven, Mr. Hayward says, "it has no great merits, and some mistakes." Had he compared, unblinded by prejudice, his own bald and bare version, a sacrilege to the memory of Göthe, of—

Es wechselt Paradieses helle
Mit tiefer schauervoller Nacht,—

with Shelley's poetical one,—

Alternating Elysian brightness
With deep and dreadful night,—

he would have seen that Shelley really did understand and feel the beauty of the passage.

"Adornment" also for *Pracht* is quite as good as "pomp," though neither express its full meaning, and Mr. Hayward is very partial to himself when he thinks his own "deep base of the rocks" better than Shelley's—"The sea foams in broad waves from its deep bottom."

For my part, I cannot consider Shelley so "monstrous a malefactor" as Mr. Hayward calls him; and one thing is certain, that the adoption of our great poet's words—aye, sometimes of whole lines,—has infused into Mr. Hayward's "Prolog in Himmel," and Scene in the Hartz Mountains, a spirit vainly looked for elsewhere.

Those who think "My Cousin the Snake" better than "My Old Paramour the Snake," are at liberty to adopt Mr. Hayward's literal reading, in which he so much prides himself,—and his vanity is egregious. But in rendering Æschylus's *κασίς πηλου κονίς*, who would spoil a fine passage by translating it, "Dust, Sister of Mud?" The four lines beginning *Das Werdende*, are perhaps

among the most difficult in the drama; but *Das Werdende* is not as Mr. Hayward gives it,—“The Creative Essence.” *Das Werdende* is “that which commences to exist—that which the actual moment produces.” Shelley’s—

Let that which ever operates and lives,
Clasp you within the limits of its love,
And seize with sweet and melancholy thoughts,
The floating phantoms of its loveliness,

is to my mind satisfactory. Mr. Hayward had many coadjutors in his task, Shelley none; but surely his high authorities never could have agreed in making Margaret say,—“she gave her little sister suck,” or have been satisfied with such expressions as these in a chorus of angels: “Joy to the mortal, whom the perishable, *sneaking*, hereditary imperfections enveloped;” or, “thou hast destroyed it, this beautiful world, with thy strong *fist!*” It is no unfair retaliation on Mr. Hayward thus to criticise his labours.

Notwithstanding his captious objections, Shelley’s translations are of the highest order,—so high, that all must regret they were so few. He alone of all men that the present age has produced, was fitted to take up Göthe’s mantle. But the best proof of the excellency of Shelley’s version, is, that Göthe himself is said to have expressed his entire approbation of these scenes of Shelley’s.

The rock on which all have split who have attempted to render *Faust*, has been an overscrupulous regard to metrical arrangement, which he, with his exquisite taste, avoided. Others do not seem to have been aware that the genius of German and English poetry is so widely different, that what produces a magical effect in the metre of one language, appears namby-pamby and puerile

in the other. Milton made the experiment in Horace's Ode to Pyrrha,—failed, and never made a second attempt. Bulwer tried to render Schiller line by line, which has given not only a stiffness to his version, but renders much of it obscure, not to say unintelligible. In his “*Ideale und das Leben*,” I was at a loss to find the original. But I have been led too far out of my way. Shelley needs no justification. *Faust* yet remains to be translated; but who would venture to put anything he could produce in competition with Shelley's Hartz Mountain scene. “There is no greater mistake than to suppose,”—I use Shelley's own words,—“that the knowledge of a language is all that is required in a translator. He must be a poet, and as great a one as his original, in order to do justice to him.” Hence the wretched plaister casts of *Faust*, more especially Anster's, so beuffed into celebrity by *Blackwood*.

Shelley's translation from Calderon is equally a masterpiece, rendering the force and colour of the first part of the *Magico Prodigioso*, with surpassing truth. There must have been something “rotten” indeed in *The Liberal*, not to be saved by these Versions, and *The Vision of Judgment*.

Previous to Lord Byron's temporary migration to Leghorn, Shelley had broken up his establishment at Pisa, and on the 28th April, writes to Mrs. Shelley, then at Spezzia, with the Williams's:—

“I am at this moment,” he says, “arrived at Lerici, where I am necessarily detained, waiting the furniture, which left Pisa last night. It would not do to leave affairs here in an *impiccio*, great as is my anxiety to see you. How are you, my best love? how have you sustained the trials of the journey? Answer me this question, and how my little babe and C[laire] are?”

After overcoming the difficulties of the Dogana, they took the Casa Magni, near Sarzana, of which I shall hereafter give a description. On the 12th May, Williams, in a journal that is very interesting, records the arrival of the long-expected boat.

"While walking with the harbour-master of Lerici on the terrace," he says, "we descried a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley's boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday, but had been driven back by the prevailing head winds; a Mr. Hislop, and two English seamen brought her round, and speak most highly of her performance. See does indeed excite my surprise and admiration. She fetches whatever she looks at. Shelley and I made a stretch off the land to try her. In short, we have now," he concludes, "a perfect plaything for the summer."

On June 12th, Williams says in the same journal,—

"Saw a vessel between the straits of Porto Venere, like a man-of-war-brig; she proved to be the Bolivar, (Lord Byron's yacht.) Sailed to try the vessels. In speed, no chance with her; but I think we keep our wind as well. This is the most beautiful craft I ever saw for the size."

"Thursday, June 20th.

"Shelley hears from Hunt, that he is arrived at Genoa, having sailed from England on the 13th May."

I have said that I shall not enter into any remarks on Mr. L. Hunt's grievances. Shelley seems to have foreseen that the periodical would fail. "Between ourselves," he says to C. T.,¹ "I greatly fear that this alliance will not succeed, for I who have never been regarded as more than a link of the two thunderbolts, cannot now consent to be even that; and how long the alliance may continue, I will not prophecy. Pray do not hint my doubts on the subject to any one, or they may do harm to Hunt, and they may be groundless."

¹ These initials were placed by Mary Shelley at the head of two letters to Horace Smith, those of April 11 and June 29, 1822.

"Shelley," says Mrs. Shelley in one of her notes, "was eager to see him. I was confined to my room with severe illness, and could not move. It was agreed, that Shelley and Williams should go to Leghorn in the boat. Strange that no fear of danger crossed our minds. Living on the sea-shore, the ocean became a plaything; as a child may play with a lighted stick, till a spark enflames a forest, and spreads destruction over all, so did we fearlessly and blindly tamper with danger, and make a game of the dangers of the ocean;" and adds, that "the running down the line of coast to Leghorn, gave no more notion of peril, than a fair-weather inland navigation would have done to those who had never seen the sea."

On the 1st July, they parted. "If ever shadow of future ill darkened the present hour, such," remarks Mrs. Shelley, "came over my mind, when they went. During the whole of our stay at Lerici, an intense presentiment of coming evil brooded over my mind, and covered this beautiful place, and genial summer, with the shadow of coming misery. I had vainly struggled with these emotions—they seemed accounted for by my illness; but at this hour of separation, they recurred with renewed violence. I did not anticipate danger from them, but a vague expectation of evil shook me to agony, and I could scarcely bring myself to let them go. The day was calm and clear, and a breeze rising at twelve o'clock, they weighed for Leghorn. They made the run in seven hours and a half. I have heard that Shelley all the time was in brilliant spirits. Not long before, talking of presentiments, he had said the only one he had ever found infallible, was the certain event of some evil fortune when he felt particularly joyous. Yet if ever fate whispered of coming disasters, such inaudible, but not

unfelt prognostics hovered around us. The beauty of the place seemed unearthly in its excess; the distance we were from all signs of civilisation, the sea at our feet, its murmurs and its roaring ever in our ears, all these things led the mind to brood over strange things, and lifting it from every-day life, caused it to be familiar with the unreal!"

That Shelley was not free from these presentiments, which shook Mrs. Shelley, is evident from lines which he wrote almost immediately before this fatal voyage, beginning,—

When the lamp is shattered,

and ending—

Its passions will rock thee,
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky,
From thy roof every rafter
Will rot; and thine eagle home
Leave the [*sic* for *thee*] naked to laughter,
When leaves fall, and cold winds come.

The only two letters which Shelley wrote during his absence, were addressed, one to Mrs. Shelley, and the other to Mrs. Williams. His indecision about his own plans, caused by a fresh exile of the Gambas, and by the *tracasserie* respecting *The Liberal* and Hunt's affairs, on which he placed his whole dependence, detained Shelley unwillingly; and he says, that Lord Byron must of course furnish the funds, as he cannot, and that he cannot depart without the necessary explanations and arrangements due to such a situation as Hunt's (aggravated as it was, by Mrs. Hunt's desperate state of health). These, he concludes by saying, he must procure, and that Lord Byron offers him the copyright of *The Vision of Judgment*

for the first number. This offer, if sincere, he prognosticates, "is *more* than enough to set up the journal, and if sincere, will set everything right!" How much he erred in this anticipation was seen by the sequel; but the tide of cant was at that time running so strong, that perhaps all the talent in the world would only have prolonged the fate of that periodical. It seems, however, that Shelley had on mature reflection abandoned the idea of joining in it, "partly from pride, not wishing to have the air of acquiring readers for his poetry, by associating it with the compositions of more popular writers, or because he might feel shackled in the free expression of his opinions, if any friends were to be compromised. By those opinions, carried even to their utmost extent, he wished to live and die, as being in his conviction not only true, but such as would conduce to the moral improvement and happiness of mankind." Mrs. Shelley adds that "the sale of the work might meanwhile either really or supposedly be injured by the free expression of his thoughts, and this evil he resolved to avoid."

His letter to Mr[s]. Williams closes with the following passages, the last of which may be considered a singular prognostic.

"I fear you are solitary and melancholy at Villa Magni, and in the intervals of the greater and more serious distress in which I am compelled to sympathize here, I figure to myself the countenance which has been the source of such consolation to me, shadowed by a veil of sorrow. How soon those hours passed, and how slowly they return to pass so soon away [*sic for again*], *perhaps for ever*, in which we have lived together so intimately, so happily!" And speaking of these strange, ominous forebodings and fears, although I am no doater on dreams, to

use the words of Southey, "there are dreams which are monitory above the power of fancy, and impressed on us by some superior influence;" and of such were the presentiments to which Shelley was subject.

His thoughtful regard for, and sacrifice of his own happiness, to that of others, is also made manifest in this letter, in which he says, "I shall urge Williams [*sic* for *him*] to sail with the first fair wind, without expecting me. I have thus the pleasure of contributing to your happiness, when deprived of every other, and of leaving you no other subject of regret but the absence of one scarcely worth regretting."

This half-formed plan of making Williams his fore-runner, it seems, was abandoned, and on the 8th day of July, the friends, whose epitaph Shelley had written, got under weigh for San Terenzo.¹

They were two friends, whose life was undivided,
So let them mingle. Sweetly they had glided
Under the grave. Let not their dust be parted,
For their two hearts in life were single-hearted.

How prophetic was that epitaph! and well might he have apostrophised the ocean with—

¹ Medwin uses the form *St. Arenzo* throughout to indicate San Terenzo. This version of the epitaph may perchance have been written by Shelley: probably more than one manuscript exists. The best version is that of the holograph in Mr. Bixby's Note Book No. I:

These are two friends whose lives
were undivided—
So let their memory be now
they have glided
Under the grave, let not their
bones be parted

For their two breasts in life
were single-hearted.

The Medwin variant might be recorded in *variorum* editions of Shelley with a caution. Mary Shelley had the Note Book in question when she first published the epitaph in 1824; and, if that was her sole source, she must have misread *breasts* for *hearts*, which scarcely makes sense, although it has satisfied editors and critics so far. Albeit written in pencil, the words are all absolutely unmistakable.

Unfathomable sea !

That sick of prey, yet howlest on for more,
Vomiting thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore,
Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
Who shall put forth on thee,
Inhospitable sea ?¹

The weather, which had been for some days calm and sultry, all at once changed from a Sirocco to a Mistral, but Shelley, who had no dread of his favourite element, and was anxious to return to those he loved, was not to be deterred from his purpose. The sky indeed bore so unpropitious an aspect, that he had been advised to put off his departure, at least till the Bolivar could be got under weigh, to convoy them. His eagerness, however, admitted of no delay, and with a fair but faint wind, they hoisted all sail, and left the port,—an English boy added to the boat's crew, by name Charles Vivian.

It is a strange coincidence, that I should have been exposed to the same squall, which proved fatal to two of my oldest and best friends. I embarked on the 5th day of July with a party with whom I was acquainted, on board a merchant vessel we had hired at Naples for the voyage to Genoa ; during the first two days, we had very light winds, lying becalmed one whole night off the Pontine Marshes, where some of our passengers were attacked with malaria, but which, though sleeping on deck in my cloak, I escaped. On the fourth day, the tail of the Sirocco brought us into the gulf of Genoa. That gulf is subject in the summer and autumn, to violent gusts of wind, and our captain, an experienced sailor, as the breeze died away, foresaw that we should not get into port that

¹ This might possibly be a very imperfect reproduction of a draft of *Time* ; but I incline to the view that

it is a characteristic mistranscription of the orthodox text, adapted to suit the Medwinian context.

night. The appearance of the sky was very threatening. Over the Apennines, which encircle Genoa as with an amphitheatre, hung masses on masses up-piled, like those I have seen after the explosion of a mine, of dark clouds, which seemed to confirm his opinion. The squall at length came, the precise time of which I forget, but it was in the afternoon; and neither in the bay of Biscay, or Bengal, nor between the Tropics, nor on the Line, did I ever witness a severer one; and being accompanied by a heavy rain, it was the more felt. We had, however, close-reefed, and were all snug and in comparatively smooth water, in consequence of the squall blowing right off the shore. We must have been five or six miles from the bay of Spezzia when it burst on us. As I stood with the glass upon deck, only one sail was visible to leeward; its rig differed from the ordinary one of the Mediterranean, the *latine* [*sic* for *lateen*], and from the whiteness of her canvas, and build, we took her for an English pleasure-boat. She was hugging the wind with a press of sail, and our skipper observed, that she would soon have it. As he spoke, a fierce gust drove furiously along, blackening the water, and soon enfolded the small craft in its misty arms; or in Shelley's own words,—

Enveloping the ocean like a pall,
It blotted out the vessel from the view.

Then came a lull, and as soon as we looked in the direction of the schooner, no trace of her was visible.

Captain Roberts's account tallies with this. He watched from the lighthouse of Leghorn, with a glass, the vessel in its homeward track; they were off Via Reggio, at some distance from shore, when a storm was driven over the sea. It enveloped this and several larger vessels in darkness. When the cloud passed onwards, Roberts

looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean, except this little schooner, which had vanished.

Little did I suppose, though I had heard from Shelley and Williams at Naples, that they had received the boat, and were settled at Villa Magni; that this schooner, which disappeared, was Shelley's. That she should have carried so much canvas, for her gaff-topsails¹ were set, might be considered unsailor-like; but it must be remembered, that the coast is very shallow, and full of reefs, which stretch out a considerable distance from land, and that it was necessary to carry all sail in order to keep clear of the surf, that rises very high along the coast. The only chance of their safety would have been to tack or wear, and drive before the wind, and return to Leghorn. But this idea probably never entered into Shelley's or Williams's mind, and from my knowledge of both their characters, they would, I am sure, have incurred any risk rather than have given up the voyage. Perhaps they were insensible to the danger till it was too late.

After tacking about all night, and the best part of the next day, we at length beat into the harbour of Genoa. There was a rumour at the Hotel de l'Europe, that an English schooner had been lost, and two Englishmen drowned in the gale near Lerici, but it never struck me that this schooner was Shelley's, and that he and Williams were the individuals; and after writing to them at the Villa Magni, I proceeded on my journey to Geneva. There, many days after my arrival, I heard from Mrs. Shelley the melancholy news of her irreparable loss, and without delay recrossed the Alps. At Spezzia the people

¹ This should probably be *gaff-top-sail* in the singular. A gaff-topsail on the mizzen mast of the little

undecked yawl "Don Juan" would have been preposterous.

of the place told me where the bodies of my friends had been cast on shore: they had been thrown on the beach, not together, but several miles apart, and the English boy's five miles from that of Shelley. The following verses, written in his eighteenth year,¹ recurred to me, which seem entirely out of place where they stand, and as poets sometimes have been inspired by a sort of second-sight, were prophetic that the ocean would be his grave.

To-morrow comes !

Cloud upon cloud with dark and deepening mass
Roll o'er the blackened waters ; the deep roar
Of distant thunder mutters awfully ;
Tempest unfolds his pinions o'er the gloom
That shrouds the boiling surge ; the pitiless fiend
With all his winds and lightnings tracks his prey,
The torn deep yawns—the vessel finds a grave
Beneath its jagged jaws.

I arrived at Pisa some hours later than I could have wished, for Lord Byron and Leigh Hunt and Trelawny, had been engaged since the morning in burning Shelley's remains. The history of this funeral pyre has been so much misrepresented, that I shall premise it with a few observations. Fourteen² days elapsed between the loss of the schooner and the finding of the corpses of my friends, and neither of them were in a state to be removed to consecrated ground ; but an obstacle to such removal under any circumstances, was, that by the quarantine laws, their friends were not permitted to have possession of their relics. The laws with respect to everything cast

¹ This is a part of the *Queen Mab* legend as recorded by Medwin. The verses are in the fourth section, 25 *et seq.* But for *with* read *in* in line 26 and for *jaws* read *gulf* at the end of the extract.

² *Fourteen days* is certainly not

right. The "Don Juan" foundered on the 8th of July 1822 ; and Shelley's corpse was found on the 18th. There has been a good deal of confusion about this. See Dowden's *Life*, Vol. II, especially page 528.

on land by the sea, being, that it must be burned, in order to prevent the possibility of any remnant bringing the plague into Italy.

A consultation took place between Byron, Hunt and Trelawny, on this subject. It had not only been the oft-repeated wish of Shelley to be buried at Rome, and there rejoin his favourite child William, who lay there, but he had left it as a sacred charge to Lord Byron, whom he had appointed as executor to his will, to fulfil this office of friendship for him.¹ Even had the state of Shelley's corse admitted of being transported to Rome, they were assured by the authorities that no representation of theirs would have altered the law; and were it not for the kind and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins, our *chargé d'affaires* at Florence, permission would not have been gained for Mrs. Shelley to receive the ashes, after they had been consumed. I say, I arrived at Pisa too late. True to his engagement, Byron and his friends had gone that day to perform the singular and pious duty of watching his funeral pyre, in order that the ashes might be sent to the English cemetery at Rome. They came to a spot marked by an old withered pine-tree, and near it, on the beach, stood a solitary ruined hut, covered with thatch. The place was well chosen for a poet's grave. Some few weeks before, I had ridden with Shelley and Byron to the very spot, which I have since visited in sad pilgrimage. Before them lay a wide expanse of the blue Mediterranean, with the islands of Elba and Gorgona

¹ In the capacity of joint Executor with Thomas Love Peacock Byron requested Godwin to call on John Hanson on the subject of Shelley's affairs. He also wrote to Hanson, who was his own solicitor, instructing him to apply to Whitton, who was Sir Timothy Shelley's, as

to the provision to be made for Mary. Details on this subject will be found in Mr. Prothero's edition of the Letters and Journals of Byron, Vol. VI, 1901, p. 127, and in Mrs. Marshall's Life and Letters of Mary, ii, 55, 65, 66, and 67.

visible in front ; Lord Byron's yacht, the Bolivar, riding at anchor at some distance in the offing. On the other side appeared an almost illimitable sandy wilderness, and uninhabitable, only broken here and there by some stunted shrubs, twisted by the sea-breeze, and stunted by the barrenness and drought of the ground in which they strove to grow. At equidistance, along the coast, rose high square towers, for the double purpose of protecting the coast from smugglers, and enforcing the quarantine regulations. This view was completed by a range of the far-off Italian Alps, that from their many folded and volcanic character, as well as from their marble summits, gave them the appearance of glittering snow ; to finish the picture, and as a foreground, was placed a remarkable group.

Lord Byron with some soldiers of the coast guard, stood about the burning pyre, and Leigh Hunt, whose feelings and nerves could not carry him through the scene of horror, lying back in the carriage ; the four post-horses panting with the heat of the noonday sun, and the fierceness of the fire. The solemnness of the whole ceremony was the more felt by the shrieks of a solitary curlew, which perhaps attracted by the corpse, wheeled in narrow circles round the pile, so narrow that it might have been struck with the hand. The bird was so fearless, that it could not have been driven away. I am indebted to one of the party present, for the interesting particulars of this scene, but must add to it Leigh Hunt's account. He says—

“The weather was beautifully fine. The Mediterranean, now soft and liquid, kissed the shore, as if to make peace with it. The yellow sand and blue sky entirely contrasted with one another, marble mountains touched the air with coolness, and the flame of the fire

bore towards Heaven its vigorous amplitude, waving and quivering with the brightness of inconceivable beauty. It seemed as if it contained the glassy essence of volatility. One might have expected a sun-bright countenance to look out of it, coming once more before it departed, to thank the friends who had done their duty."

I have understood that Leigh Hunt was much offended at the account above given respecting the carriage, but why I am at a loss to guess. To what purpose should he have stood for some hours by the side of the scorching furnace, when there were so many others of stronger nerves, and of better health, present? This extreme sensitiveness on his part is much out of place, for neither my informant nor myself had the slightest intention of throwing on him a taunt, or taxing him with the slightest dereliction of duty. His regard for Shelley is not to be questioned. The very excess of feeling that he displayed, might, in default of other proofs, have best testified it.

But Byron was unable long to withstand the sight, or perhaps the heat, and by way of distraction, swam off to his yacht.

Writing to Mr. Moore, he says,—

"The other day, at Via Reggio,"—he does not specify the day of the burning,—“I thought proper to swim off to my schooner, the Bolivar, in the offing, and thence to shore again, about three miles or better, in all. As it was at midday, under a broiling sun, the consequence has been a feverish attack;” and then he adds, in another paragraph of the same letter, though not connecting the burning with the swimming,—“We have¹ been burning the bodies of Shelley and Williams. You can have no idea what an extraordinary effect such a funeral pyre has on a desert shore, with mountains in the background, and the sea before,—the singular appearance the salt and frankincense give to the flames.”

Much objection has been started to these accessories to

¹ As I have pointed out elsewhere (*Letters of Edward John Trelawny*, Oxford University Press, 1910, p. 14),

this *have* of Moore's should doubtless be *had*, which does connect the burning with the swimming.

the funeral pyre, which have been condemned as bearing the character of a heathen rite; but without them it would not only have been dangerous to have assisted at the ceremony, but from the state of the body it would have been intolerable.

In the evening I saw Lord Byron. He was in a high state of fever, from the excitement of the day, combined with exposure for some hours to the sun, in swimming and floating. He was, indeed, almost amphibious, and I have often thought that he must have possessed, as is sometimes known, a peculiar and natural buoyancy,* for he could remain for hours in the water, as he had done that day. The next morning, save and except some blisters, which he said were not confined to his face, he was pretty well recovered.

Mrs. Shelley and her son Percy, and Mrs. Williams and her two children, had already arrived at Pisa, and it was a melancholy satisfaction to hear their narrative of this tragedy, that threw for them a shadow over the world. During more than a week, passed with them and Lord Byron, we canvassed the whole sad catastrophe, and I learnt further particulars of the loss of the

fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That laid so low that sacred head.

It would seem that both Shelley and Williams had been alike insensible to the squall, for the boat was seen to go down with all her sails set. They could not, therefore, have anticipated it, and must have kept a very bad

* Lord H. tells me that when he was at Venice, he saw a crowd of persons watching a torch moving on the Lagune, and found that it indicated the presence of Lord Byron, who was swimming with one arm, the other lifting the flambeau.

look out, as proved afterwards by Roberts's discovering her, sunk in ten fathoms water,—not capsized, or injured ; and I may here mention that he possessed himself of her, and decked her, and sailed in her, but found her unseaworthy, and that her shattered planks now lie rotting on the shore of one of the Ionian Islands, on which she was wrecked. But hoping to be excused this anac[h]ronism, I will go on to say, that Williams was an expert swimmer, and had, as the boat was filling, found time partially to undress himself, or might have done so in the water, nor can there be a doubt that he made every effort to save his life—perhaps that of his friend, whilst Shelley, who could never learn to swim, had been reading to the last moment, quite unconscious or heedless of danger, and lost in abstraction like a second Archimedes ; for when found, he had his right hand and arm locked in his waistcoat, where he had in haste thrust a volume of Keats's Poems, open at *The Eve of St. Agnes*, a poem which he wonderfully admired, and after the death of his brother poet, carried continually about with him the book. Mrs. Williams painted to me the days and nights of horror herself and Mrs. Shelley had passed during the eight days of suspense that intervened between the loss of the schooner and some of the wreck being cast on shore.

“Then,” says Mrs. Shelley, “the spell was snapped. It was all over—an interval of agonizing doubt, of days passed in miserable journies to gain tidings,—of hopes that took firmer root even as they were more baseless, were changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore.” In the meanwhile, their absence was attributed first to the rough weather, and they consoled themselves with the reflection, that they might have deferred their departure from

this circumstance. Then came a letter of enquiry from Trelawny, which soon dissipated that conjecture. He arrived to console them with the thought that Shelley and Williams had taken refuge in one of the islands, Gorgona, or perhaps Sardinia, and their eyes were continually directed seaward, in the hope of descrying the well-known sail." Day followed day,—

O!

The hours for those who watched for him,
With chill forebodings, and with fluttering hearts :
There lay the uniform blank sea, that gave
No certain tidings, but left ample space
For miserable doubt, report, and hope
Beyond all hope.

But the fatal news was at last brought by the discovery, first of one body, and then of the other. In a poem, which I dedicated to Lord Byron, I endeavoured to depict the awful suspense of those days, and under the name of Julian, to idealize Shelley, and describe his funeral pyre. I copy some passages from a rough draft, not having the original, and imperfectly, for the rythm is here and there defective, and the rhymes wanting: but the lines may serve as a transcript of my feelings, are such as all hearts may sympathise in, and may not be considered out of place here.

The storm is up—in haste they reach
A pathway winding from the beach—
That hope-winged speed arrests their tears.
A flash! the curving coast appears,
The isles in front, and all beyond,
A raging sea without a bound.
Where is the boat? no boat is there,
That bay's lone moanings mock despair!
Where is the boat? they gaze again—
Look they for comfort to the main?

On that wild waste of waves they gaze,
 And fancy, in the lightning's blaze,
 Paints every breaker as a sail
 In safety riding out the gale;
 And once they thought they could descry
 A floating form—oh, misery!
 And hear a swimmer's drowning cry.

They gazed, how long they knew not, on
 That wilderness,—and yet
 They ceased not with the rising sun
 To gaze—nor when he set.

They spoke not—stirred not all that day,
 None ever passed so slow away;
 So cold to feel—so drear to see—
 Such doubt was worse than certainty!
 Another, and another day!
 It ill became, like common clay,
 That form so fair to rot;
 To bleach upon the dark green sea,
 To wandering fish and birds a prey;
 Alas! why comes he not?

The faded flower, its scent and hue,
 Ah tell me whither are they flown?
 Canst thou revive their charms anew?
 Will the torn bud expand for you,
 The promise of its leaves unblown?
 The accents of the broken lyre—
 Tell me, too, whither are they gone?
 Go! re-unite the parted wire,
 Reanimate the spirit fled
 Of music, that with magic lure,
 Had spells medicinal, to cure
 All pangs but love's—then, only then
 Seek life among the dead!

The words were his, but words are vain—
 Rash spoken—straight recalled again;
 And these, his "ancient comrade Pain,"¹
 Wrung from an overheated brain.

¹ In this extract from the biographer's poem there are many phrases more deserving of inverted commas than this misquotation

from the *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills*, where we read:
 And its ancient pilot, Pain,
 Sits beside the helm again.

Oh, say not with the spirit fled,
That earth's affections all are dead,
That in that world of woe or weal,
As world there is, we cease to feel,
Have unforgot to prove,
For those whom we have left below,
As pure, and as intense a glow
Of pity and of love!

Night followed night, day day of woes—
One more, an age, is at its close;
But as the sun's broad disk declined,
Led by a sea-bird's scream, they find,
Waif of the ocean, where he lies,
The fairest thing beneath the skies.
Oh! 'twas a piteous sight to see
One they had loved so tenderly,
Cast like a worthless weed away,
The tresses of his profuse hair
Undabbled by the ooze or spray,—
He lies like one who mocks decay,
Best fitted for a mermaid's lair,
Or some cold Nereide's bridegroom to be,
In the dark caves of the unfathomed sea.

It was the azure time of June!
And now beneath the depth of noon,
So cloudless, that the infantine moon
Broke with her rising horn, the line
Of the snow-fringed Apennine;

A pyre they raise with pious care,
For thus he wished his dust, when driven,
And scattered to the winds of Heaven,
Should to its elements repair;
His parted spirit hovering nigh,
Commingle with the spangled sky,
To be the overhanging day,
The soul of that Elysian isle,
Its breath and life; that he and they,
So loved—in that divinest clime,
Should bask in nature's genial smile
And gladden all things thro' all time
Transfigure—transfused, be one
Beneath the universal sun.

And lo ! the silver-winged sea-mew,
 That round and round the reeking pyre
 In ever lessening circles flew ;
 That bird was now so tame,
 Scarce could they scare it from the fire
 Of that funereal flame ;
 For still it shrieked, as in the storm,
 A human voice it might be deemed,
 So piteous and so wild it screamed,
 As loth to leave that lifeless form.
 And all who saw the bird, had said,
 " It was the spirit of the dead."

Mr. Galt, in his *Life of Byron*, has described the conduct of the party who assisted at Shelley's funeral pyre, as resembling on their return that of frantic Bacchanals, after tearing limb from limb, Pentheus. It is a pure fiction,—poetical and classical, certainly ; but no scene of the sort occurred.

Singularly enough, Shelley, in the *Epipsychidion*, seems to have foreseen the nature of his funeral.

A radiant death—a fiery sepulchre.

I heard from my friends, that Shelley had been subject during this Villagiatura [*sic*], at the Casa Magni, to strange hallucinations, and from the description of the place, which I had afterwards an opportunity of verifying, it is scarcely to be wondered that his imagination, as happened in Carnarvonshire, naturally given to the marvellous, should have been strangely excited, and grown familiar with the Unreal. The extreme isolation of San Terenzo—its almost magical and supernatural beauty—the continual beating of the sea-waves against the walls of that solitary villa—the sort of reading in which he indulged there, and a mind ever on the rack with profound metaphysical speculations, dreamy and vague, engendered in him a nervousness, that produced extraordinary waking dreams.

Williams records in his interesting journal, the following anecdote:—"After tea, walking with Shelley on the terrace, and observing the effect of moonshine on the water, he complained of being unusually nervous—he grasped me violently by the arm, and stared steadfastly on the white surf, that broke upon the beach under our feet. Observing him sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he were in pain, but he only answered, by saying,—‘*There it is again—There!*’ He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he saw me, a naked child (*the child of a friend who had lately died*,—meaning his own child) rise from the sea, and clap its hands as in joy, smiling at him. This was a trance that it required some reasoning and philosophy entirely to awaken him from; so forcibly had the vision operated on his mind.”¹ But this was not the only illusion to which he had been a prey at San Terenzo. Byron,* the most superstitious of human beings, related the following story, which I afterwards heard confirmed by Mrs. Williams. “Shelley, soon after he arrived at the Casa Magni, one night alarmed all the house with loud and piercing cries. The Williams’s rushed out of their rooms, and Mrs. Shelley, who had miscarried a few days before, got at the same time as far as the door, and fainted. They found Shelley in the saloon, with his eyes wide open, and gazing on vacancy, with a horror as though he saw

* Lord Byron even formed good or evil auguries from the flight of birds and when he met with a *single* magpie in his rides, I have seen him seriously take off his hat—as a propitiation.

¹ This snippet from Williams’s Journal as given by Mary Shelley in the *Life, Letters, &c.*, is of course disfigured by some inaccuracies, apart from the interpolation of the words “meaning his own child” in

the parenthesis. Those four words are neither Williams’s nor Mary Shelley’s, but Medwin’s own, and untrue, the child having been Claire’s little Allegra.

some spectre. He was in a deep trance, a sort of somnambulism. On waking him, he related to them that he had had a vision. He thought that a figure wrapped in a mantle, came to his bedside, and beckoned him. He got up, and followed, and when in the drawing-room, the phantom lifted up the hood of his cloak, and said, "*Siete soddisfatto*," and vanished.¹

He had been reading a strange drama, attributed to Calderon, entitled the [*sic*] *El Encapotado*. It is so rare, that Washington Irving told me he had hunted for it, but without success, in several of the public libraries of Spain. The story is, that a sort of Cypriano, or Faust, is through life thwarted in his plans for the acquisition of wealth or honour or happiness, by a mysterious stranger, who stands in his way like some evil spirit. The hero is at length in love—we know it is the master-passion in Spaniards. The day is fixed for his nuptials, when the unknown contrives to sow dissension between him and his bride elect, and to break off the match. Infuriate with his wrongs, he breathes nothing but revenge; but for a time all attempts to hunt out his mantled foe prove abortive; at length he presents himself of his own accord. When about to fight, the *embocado* unmasks, and discovers the Fetch of himself—his *double*, saying, "Are you satisfied?" The catastrophe is the death of the victim from horror.

The play, which would have made a most admirable subject for Hoffman, worked strongly on Shelley's imagination, and accounts for the midnight scene.

Mr. Moore says that "the melancholy death of poor Shelley, affected Lord Byron's mind much less with grief

¹ Professor Dowden treats these brain-fag stories from a purely common-sense point of view. They are not very important or interest-

ing. Those who desire to examine them further, should turn to the *Life*, Vol. II, Chap. xii.

for the actual loss of his friend, than with bitter indignation against those who had through life so grossly misinterpreted him; and never certainly was there an instance where the expressed absence of all religion in an individual was assumed so eagerly as an excuse for the absence of all charity in judging him." He adds, that, "though never personally acquainted with Mr. Shelley, I can fully join with those who much loved him, in admiring the various excellences of his heart and genius, and lamenting the too early doom that robbed us of the maturer fruits of both. His short life," he goes on to say, "had been, *like his poetry, a sort of bright, erroneous dream! false in the general principles on which it proceeded, though beautiful and attractive in some of its details!* Had full time been allowed for the over-light of his imagination, to be tempered by the judgment which in time was still in reserve, the world at large would have been taught to pay that homage to his genius which those only who saw what he was capable of, (what does Moore mean by this?) can now be expected to accord to it." Faint praise, and coming from the quarter it does, and from one totally unable to estimate anything but the actual and material, not much to be regarded.

Returning to Lord Byron's superstition, I will cite as a proof thereof, the following anecdote from "the Page of Moore." "Mr. Cowell, paying a visit to Lord Byron at Genoa, was told by him, that some friends of Shelley sitting together one evening, had seen that gentleman distinctly, as they thought, walk into a little wood at Lerici; when at the same moment, as they afterwards discovered, he was far away, in quite a different direction. 'This,' added Lord Byron, in a low, awestruck tone of voice, 'was but ten days before Shelley died!'"

I believe Lord Byron felt severely the loss of Shelley, though it must be confessed that his observation at the pyre,—“Why this rag of a black handkerchief retains its form better than that human body;” and his saying on the contest that took place between Mrs. Shelley and Leigh Hunt, respecting the possession of Shelley’s heart, which would not consume with his ashes, (and which amiable dispute he compared to that of Ajax and Ulysses for the arms of Achilles,) and his remark,—“What does Hunt want with the heart? he’ll only put it in a glass-case, and make sonnets on it”—savoured strongly of *Don Juan*. I believe, I say, that he really did lament the loss of Shelley. He knew well his superiority over his other correspondents,—knew that his friendship for him, so often proved, was pure and disinterested, and free from all worldly considerations, and that the sundering of that tie left him without a real friend in the world.

On the 22nd of August, I took leave of Mrs. Shelley, Mrs. Williams, and Lord Byron, to return to Genoa.

I performed this journey in a *caratella*, with relays of one horse, a mode of conveyance, which Mathews, the invalid, had reason for recommending, for it enabled me to make much more progress than I could have done by regularly posting with two. I shall not enter into my feelings during this mournful pilgrimage to the sites of my friends’ funeral pyres, at some distance apart, easily discoverable by their ashes. I had another duty to perform, to visit the country house where they had passed their *villegiatura*.

From Sarzana to Lerici there is only a cross (and that a narrow) carriage road. After a somewhat difficult ascent of three miles, the *caleche* set me down at a bye footpath, which conducts to San Terenzo. The sky was

perfectly cloudless, and not a breath of air relieved the intense heat of an Italian August sun. The day had been unusually oppressive, and there was a mistiness in the atmosphere, or rather a glow which softened down the distances into those mellow tints, in which Claude delighted to bathe his landscapes. I was little in a mood to enjoy the beauties which increased every moment during this walk. I followed mechanically a pathway overhung with trellised vines, and bordered with olive trees, contrasted here and there with the massy broad dark foliage of the fig-tree. For a mile or two, I continued to ascend, till on a sudden a picture burst on my view, that no pen could describe. Before me was the broad expanse of the Mediterranean, studded with islands, and a few fishing boats with their lattine [*sic*, this time, for *lateen*] sails, the sun's broad disc just dipping in the waves.

Thick groves of fruit trees, interspersed with cottages and villas, sloped down to the shores of the gulf of Spezzia; and safely land-locked, a little to the left Lerici, with its white flat-roofed houses almost in the sea, stood in the centre, and followed the curve of this bay; the two promontories projecting from which, were surmounted with castles, for the protection of the coast, and the enforcement of the quarantine laws. The descent, now become rapid and broken, and deeply worn into the rock, only offered occasional glimpses of the sea, the two islets in front, and the varied coast of Porto Venere to the right. I now came in sight of San Terenzo, a village, or rather a miserable collection of windowless black huts, piled one above the other, inclosed within and imbedded, like swallows' nests, in the rocks that overhang and encircle it. The place is inhabited solely by fishermen and their families, on the female part of whom devolves [*sic*]

(as is common in Italy) the principal labours. However ungraceful in itself, the peasantry of most parts of Italy have some peculiarity of costume, but the women of San Terenzo are in a savage state of nature, perfect Ichthyophagæ; their long, coal-black hair trails in greasy strings, unwashed and uncombed over their faces; and some of these fiendish looking creatures had not even fastened it in a knot behind the head, but suffered it to hang half way down their backs. They had neither shoes nor stockings, and the rags which scarcely hid their deformity, were strongly impregnated with the effluvia of the fish they were carrying on their bare heads to the neighbouring markets. Their children were just such meagre yellow imps, as from such mothers and filth and poverty of food, might be supposed. The men I did not see; they were most probably following the occupation of fishing.

Between this village and Lerici, but nearer the former, was pointed out to me the solitary villa, or *palazzo* as it is called, which was about to waken in me so many bitter recollections. It is built immediately upon the beach, and consists of one story; the ground-floor, when the Libeccio set strongly in, must have been washed by the waves. A deaf, unfeeling old wretch, a woman who had the care of the house, and had either witnessed or heard of all the desolation of which it had been the scene, with a savage unconcern, and much garrulity, gave a dry narrative of the story, as she led me through the apartment. Below was a large unpaved sort of entrance-hall, without doors or windows, where lay the small flat-bottomed boat, or skiff, much shattered, of which I have already spoken. It was the same my poor friends had on the Serchio. Against the wall, and scattered about the floor, were oars and fragments of spars,—they told too well the

tale of woe. A dark and somewhat perpendicular staircase now led us to the only floor that remained. It reminded me somewhat in its arrangement, of an Indian bungolow [*sic*]; the walls whitewashed. The rooms, now without furniture, consisted of a saloon and four chambers at the four corners; this, with the exception of a terrace in front, was the whole apartment. The verandah, which ran the entire length of the villa, was of considerable width, and the view from it of a magical and supernatural beauty.

There was now a calm desolation in the unrippled marble of the sea, that reminded me in its contrast, of the days and nights of tempest and horror which Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams experienced, balanced between hope and fear for the fate of their beloved husbands—fancying that every sail would bring them to their homes, and now that in the roaring of every wave they could distinguish their drowning cries, I could picture to myself the ghastly smile with which Trelawny related the finding of the corpses,—the torpor and unconsciousness of Mrs. Williams,—the sublime firmness of Mrs. Shelley, contrasted with her frame worn out with sickness,—their children, too young to be sensible of their loss, clasped in their despairing and widowed mothers' arms. All this rushed upon my imagination, and insensible to the heat, or fatigue of the ascent, I found myself, scarcely knowing how, where my caleche [*sic*] was waiting for me; and it was midnight, and after a twenty-two hours' journey, more harassing in mind and body than I had ever experienced, when I reached the inn at Spezzia.

The ashes of Shelley were borne to Rome by one of his friends, who had been most active and instrumental in conquering the objections of the authorities to their collection, who

By supplications and unwearied prayers
 Hardly prevailed to wrest the stubborn law
 Aside thus far ;

and who, after making all due and decent preparations for the funeral-pyre at which he was the chief mourner "committed with hands scorched and blistered by the flames, the burnt relics to a receptacle prepared for the purpose, and then in compass of a small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtues were a crown of glory to the world, and whose love had been the source of happiness, pure and good."¹ But on their arrival at Rome, considerable scruples arose in the mind of the clergyman applied to to officiate, concerning the burying in consecrated ground, ashes. A friend of mine, himself no mean poet, and who wrote an elegy on Shelley worthy of a place here, and whose position in life gave him some weight, exerted himself, and successfully, in smoothing the difficulty; and a day was fixed for the interment. The funeral was attended by most of the English still lingering in the metropolis of the world. The crowd of strangers that people it from all countries, had withdrawn, and left only behind a few stragglers, and lovers of art, and mourners over the once great queen of the universe, loth to quit it, as mourners the grave of one

¹ These are meant to represent, and meant also to misrepresent, Mary Shelley's words, in her note on the poems of 1822. Describing Trelawny's actions before, at, and after the cremation of Shelley and Williams, she says 'It was a fearful task: he stood before us at last, his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose. And there

[not *then*], in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world—whose love had been the source of happiness, peace, and good,—to be buried with him! That 'small case' remained many weeks at Rome in the custody of Mr. Freeborn, a trading consular official, to whom they were sent from Leghorn in August 1822 to await Trelawny's arrival.

beloved. This friend writing to me says,—¹

"Behold the melancholy cortège taking up its line, and following the remains of him, who should have had a distinguished place in the great national cemetery of the poets of his country, to the Protestant burial-ground, which had been unwillingly accorded, through the intercession of Cardinal Gonsalvi, prime minister of Pope Pius VI., to us heretics. That last refuge for the stranger-dead, lies, as you know, at the further extremity of the Eternal City, and to get to it, we had to traverse Rome in all its length. I was never so impressed by any funeral; we viewed on all sides the tottering porticoes, the isolated columns, which told me of the ravages of the Goths and Vandals, those savages, after gorging themselves in the blood of the vanquished, those barbarians, who insatiate of slaughter, when they had nothing else to destroy, vented their jealous rage on the creations of genius, which like the spectres of their victims, seemed to stand in mockery and defiance. They could shatter the mighty giantess, tear her limb from limb; but the Torso, like that of the Vatican, the admiration of Michael Angelo in his blindness, yet remained to suggest *what* she

¹ To plain straight-forward folk Medwin's absurd mysteries are an affliction. Although it is a very limited crowd from whose ranks we have to select the unnamed correspondent in this case, he has not yet, as far as I know, been identified. Some original papers bearing on the funeral were communicated to *The Athenæum* of August 23 and 29, 1879; and some more, from the Clairmont archives, appeared in an article which I contributed to *Macmillan's Magazine* for May 1880, headed "Shelley's Life near Spezzia, his Death and Burials." It seemed to me then, as it does now, quite clear that the date on which Joseph Severn had arranged with Mr. Freeborn to take the ashes to the Cemetery was the 21st of January 1823. In a letter to Charles Armitage Brown, written on that day on return from the funeral, Severn gives the names of those who were present as "General Cockburn, Sir C. Sykes, Messrs. Kirkup, Westmacott, Scoles, Freeborn, and the Revs. W. Cook and Burgess." He tells how the box was enclosed in a coffin and mentions the "melan-

choly cortège" as Medwin's friend called it.

Mrs. Angeli says at page 312 of *Shelley and his Friends in Italy*, that the ashes were deposited in the Protestant Cemetery by the Rev. Richard Burgess in November 1822; but there is nothing in that gentleman's statement, given in the Appendix to her volume, which I should accept as evidence either of the date or of his having done more than assist at the funeral. Half a century is a long time for the retention of exact details in a man's mind in such a matter. Mr. Burgess, giving his reminiscences of the incident to a friend in 1874, might well be excused for not making clear what he had probably forgotten, that seven or eight weeks at least must have elapsed between his introduction to the box of ashes in Freeborn's wine-cellar and his accompanying Mr. Cook and the rest to the Cemetery. He says he arrived at Rome in the latter part of November 1822, but does not in fact say how soon the funeral took place, or which of the two "Revs." as Severn calls them read the service.

had been. They could melt the Roman cement, enwrap her domes in flames, throw down her statues from their heights that frowned upon them, and when tired of the labour of destruction, encumber the bed of the Tiber with her mutilated remains.

"It was impossible for the coldest or most insensible and ignorant of our train, to pass, without somewhat of such emotions, those monuments of Roman greatness. Neither my companion nor myself spoke, or expressed our admiration or sympathy, that were too strong for words. Self-absorbed, I allowed my ideas to wander, lost in the past. I neither gave the ruins names, nor suggested doubts as to the period of their erection; whether they were of the time of Julius Cæsar, or the Antonines. Nothing," he adds, "is so delightful as the mystery, the vagueness that hangs about most of what is left of ancient Rome, for it is this very scepticism and uncertainty that allow the imagination to revel in a world of dreams and visions, each more enchanting than the last.

"This idea brought with it many a passage in Shelley's works, which is made intelligible to our minds by a sort of divination,—not from the construction of the words themselves, but from the dim shadowing out of some profound and metaphysical idea, which from the imperfection of language, defies analysis; and his Elegy on Keats more especially came into my contemplations, which I had by heart, and with it the prophetic augury of his finding a last asylum in Rome, with the friend of his heart.

Or go to Rome, at once the sepulchre—
Oh! not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought,
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought.
For such as he can lend, they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey.
And he is gathered to the kings of thought,
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

Go thou to Rome, at once the paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness,—
And where its wrecks, like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds and fragrant copses deck
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the spirit of the spot, shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where like an infant's smile, over the dead,
The [*sic* for *A*] light of laughing flowers along the turf [*sic* for
grass] is spread.

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid, with wedge sublime,

Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand
 Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
 A field is spread, in which a newer band
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

Here pause.

"Awaking from this reverie, I could scarcely recal my scattered senses, or return to the realities of life. I contemplated with a mixture of sorrow and regret, the ashes of one, who once shed a light upon the world—the extinction of a surpassing spirit that came for the world to know it not; and then the mouldering mass of temples, pillars, cornices, and columns broken and strewed around 'the dusty nothing,' so well harmonizing with my own feelings,—the solemn scene—with that remnant of mortality, the ruins of him whom we were literally about to consign to kindred ruins—Ashes to Ashes—Dust to Dust!

"We reached the Campo Santo. The graves were yet young, the tenants few in number; most of the mounds had not even a head-stone, whilst here and there a monument, surmounted by an urn of classical form and elegant design, shewed by the glittering whiteness of the marble, that it was fresh from the hand of the sculptor.* They shewed themselves in relieve from the ancient and mouldering walls of the city, which bound the Campagna, partly hidden by a mass that just lifted itself above the horizon. It was the Pyramid of Caius Cestius, and seemed to frown in proud defiance, a giant among the pigmies, on the intruders upon its solitary greatness. They too seemed to have chosen the verge of the enclosure, as unwilling to mingle their clay with that of an idolatrous race, and an outworn creed. And who, asks Lord Byron, was Caius Cestius? The annals of his country contain no records of his deeds. His name is not even chronicled in story. Who was he, that he should have pavilioned his ashes, whilst so many heroes and patriots lie undistinguished and lost in the dust of their country's desolation? What a lesson is here for mortality! what a homily to tell of

The more than empty honours of the tomb!†

* In 1820, Mr. G., a great oriental traveller, told me, that when he was in Athens, an English artist died there, and that it was the wish of his friends to erect a monument to him, but that not only no sculptor could be found to execute one, but not even a stone-mason to carve the letters of his name on a tablet!

† Sepulcri supervacuus honores.—*Horace*.

"Whether the same feelings operated on the assembly, I know not, I was blinded by my tears, that fell fast and silently on the poet's grave.

Oh !

It is a grief too deep for tears, when all
Is reft at once, when some surpassing spirit,
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope,
But pale despair, and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame—the web of human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

Well might it be added,—

Art and eloquence,
And all the shows of the world are frail and vain,
To weep a loss that turns their light to shade.

"After the conclusion of the affecting rite, we visited the grave of his favourite son, William, and that of Keats—whose spirit it must soothe to feel the daisies growing over him—a dream that was here realized, for they absolutely starred the turf."

Shelley seems in *Adonais* to have had a presage that he should soon rejoin his friend—be united with him in death, as they were in their destinies. Both were victims to the envenomed shafts of invidious critics,—to the injustice of those nearest to them, and who should have been dearest ; both were cut off in the flower of their youth and talent, and both are sleeping among strangers in a foreign land. Little did either desire to sleep in the unmaternal bosom of their own. She was to them a harsh and unnatural step-mother. Here they sleep sweetly. Shelley's favourite wish, often expressed, was to repose here. He says,—“ It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place ;” and in a letter speaking of it, he calls it “ the most beautiful and solemn cemetery he ever beheld, and expresses his delight to see the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh with dews, and hear the whispering of the winds among the leaves of the trees, which have overgrown the tomb of Cestius !”

A plain slab, overhung with parasite plants, and shrubs and flowers, and those long feathery weeds which I have

so often remarked on the ruins of Rome, vulgarly called Maiden's Hair, reminding us of the dishevelled locks of a mourner waving over one beloved, contains the venerated name of Shelley, with the date of his birth, and death. Below which is the following inscription,—

Nothing of him but [*sic for that*] doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change,
Into something rich and strange.

Lines to my mind very inapplicable, for they allude to one drowned, and lost at sea. Alas! Poor Lycidas! I could not help thinking a much more appropriate motto might have been selected from a poem I have heard him so often read, and admire :¹

So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high
Through the dear might of him who walks the waves.
Where other groves, and other streams among,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest regions meek of peace and love:
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory, move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.

Many "melodious tears" have been shed over the graves of Shelley and Keats, but none have more affected me than those offered by one, a native of a country from which Shelley frequently expressed a hope that he might in later times expect justice, America. The passage is so beautiful, that I transcribe it entire, being unwilling to spoil by garbling it. It is from the pen of Willis.²

¹ But Shelley probably read what Milton really wrote; whereas, here, in the third line, *among* has been substituted for Milton's *along*; and the sixth line is a corruption of—

In the blest kingdoms meek of
joy and love.

² This stuff of Nathaniel Parker Willis's is scarcely of a quality to compensate for the heavy indignity which he offered to the ashes of Shelley in depositing his buttocks on the poet's grave.

“With a cloudless sky, and the most delicious air I have ever breathed, we sat down upon the marble slab placed over the ashes of poor Shelley, and read his own Lament on Keats, who sleeps just below, at the foot of the hill. The cemetery is rudely formed into three terraces, with walks between, and Shelley’s grave, and one without a name, occupy a small niche above, made by the projection of a mouldering wall-tower, and crowded with many shrubs, and a peculiar fragrant yellow flower which perfumes the air around for several feet. The avenue by which you ascend from the gate, is lined with high branches of the musk-rose, in the most luxuriant bloom, and all over the cemetery the grass is thickly mingled with flowers of every hue. If Shelley had chosen his own grave at the time, he would have selected the very spot where he has since been laid—the most sequestered and flowery nook of the place he describes so feelingly;” and Mr. Willis adds,—“It takes away from the pain with which one stands over the grave of an acquaintance or friend, to see the sun lying so warm upon it, and the flowers springing so profusely and cheerfully. Nature seems to have a care for those who died so far from home.”

It was a much more melancholy visit I paid in the autumn of last year to Field-place. In that home he was born, on that lawn he had played as a child,—there he had dreamed as a boy, and suffered as a man. The mansion of his forefathers I found deserted and in disrepair, the family dispersed, and it was about to be tenanted by a stranger to the county—a city alderman. I walked in moody sadness over the neglected shrubberies, paced the paths, weed over-grown and leaf-strewn, of the once neatly kept flower-gardens, where we had so often walked together, and talked in the confidentiality of early and unsophisticated friendship; there, too, he had in many a solitary hour brooded over his first disappointment in love, and had had his sensitive spirit torn by the coldness and alienation of those dearest to him. All this past through my mind.

How little did Rogers know of the human heart when he wrote *The Pleasures of Memory*!

I also visited the chancel in Horsham church, belonging to the family of Michell, his maternal ancestors, where some of my own sleep. There a flattering inscription blazons the virtues of his father, but I was shocked to find that no cenotaph has been raised to the memory of the poet, that no record exists of one who will ennoble and perpetuate the name of Shelley, when the race that bears it shall become extinct. How true it is, that a prophet is no prophet in his own country; his family, too, seem to be quite unaware of his greatness, and deem him neither an honour nor a pride. Bristol has with a late repentance raised a statue to Chatterton,—but where lie his bones? Florence has at last done tardy justice to Dante, Stuttgart to Schiller, Frankfort to Göthe, and Mayence to Güttenberg. More liberal times will come, when Byron and Keats and Shelley will each find a niche, if not in that temple which has been so often profaned by the ashes of mediocrity, in some future Valhalla, worthy to enshrine them. But Shelley needs no monument. His fame, like the Pyramid beneath which he sleeps, stands on a base unshaken and eternal. He lives in his works, and will live on through all time. But

Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor is the glittering foil¹
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove,
As he pronounces justly on each deed.
Of so much fame in Heaven expect the meed!

These Memorabilia would be incomplete, if I did not, in execution of my duty as a biographer, draw up, how-

¹ Here again Milton's own reading would probably have been more to Shelley's taste—

Nor in the glistering foil—

as also in the last two lines, where the biographer has substituted *justly* for the choice and powerful *lastly* and the *meed* for *thy meed*.

ever imperfect, a summary of Shelley's character, both as a man and a poet, for which I am partly indebted to some of his contemporaries. I will begin with the last.¹

It is no difficult task to characterise, in its general aspect, the Poetry of Shelley, for its tendencies were clear, its origin known, its progress uniform, his types openly avowed. Greece stands first in his estimation, the imposing grandeur of the Ancient Tragedy, the majestic serenity of Plato and Homer, the Bible with its oriental splendour, its bold imagery, the impetuous energy of its inspired Verses—the Italian era of Dante, the English era of Milton, in Spanish Calderon, in German Schiller and Göthe, in French the Sceptics of the 18th Century, not as enlightened philosophers but as Apostles of Reason, as courageous enemies of tyranny in all its forms—Such were the admired models of Shelley . . . Guided by them, and less original perhaps than he wished to be, he continued the work abandoned by Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge, whom he taunts with their apostacy. He fought by the side of Lord Byron, but with an enthusiasm more sincere, a faith in the progress of humanity, a sympathy for the human race, which the last never knew. . . *All* the poems indeed of Shelley, numerous as they are, resolve themselves into one of which they may be regarded as so many separate Cantos. They present to the mind in their different episodes, their accidental details, or sites or costumes, but one type, always equally sublime, that of a man who devotes himself, suffers and dies for his fellow beings, a Christ deprived of his divine

¹ Medwin does not explain what "the last" means; but, in the original issue of the *Life*, these words are immediately followed by the paragraph in inverted commas beginning with the words "Shelley's

Poetry" and ending with "Beaumont and Fletcher." What now stands between "the last" and "Shelley's Poetry" is written in the margins and marked for insertion where it now appears.

attributes, a philosophic Martyr, a Confessor of Liberty. It is to be remarked also that as years ran on, his Hymns lost their original asperity. Like a brilliant metal which rejects and leaves in the bottom of the burning furnace its black scoriæ, the love of Shelley for his kind disengaged itself from all its bitterness and all its hate. Those tyrants whom he cursed he pities. That reactionary baptism of blood which he first preached and which appeared to him but equitable he recoils from. The Revolutions which he invokes are treated as worthy [?] of a regenerated world—He wishes them to be pure of all Vengeance, of all violent expiation—The strange truths which he went out to seek in undiscovered lands are almost like those from which other enthusiasts have derived the principle of Christianity. He speaks as a brother to all men, to those even who have repulsed the dogma of fraternity.

“Shelley’s poetry is invested with a dazzling and subtle radiance, which blinds the common observer with excess of light. Piercing through this, we discover that the characteristics of his poetic writings are an excessive sympathy with the whole universe, material and intellectual—an ardent desire to benefit his species, and an impatience of the tyrannies and superstitions that hold them bound. In all his works there is a wonderfully sustained sensibility, and a language lofty and fit for it. His ear was of the finest, and his command of language unrivalled. His mastery of words was so complete, and his majestic and happy combinations so frequent, that the richness is often obscured by the profusion.” Again: “he has the art of using the stateliest words, and the most learned idioms, without incurring the charge of pedantry, so that passages of more splendid and sonorous writing, are not to be selected from any writer since the

time of Milton; and yet when he descends from his ideal world, and comes home to us in our humble bowers and our yearnings after love and affection, he attunes the most natural feelings to a style so proportionate, and withal to a modulation so truly musical, that there is nothing to surpass it in the lyrics of Beaumont and Fletcher."

His ear was so attuned to harmony that his blank verse never tires with monotony, and we doubt in reading it whether it has not had the adjunct of Rhyme—unlike the Versi Sciolti of the Italians, which are unreadable in a long poem.

"His is the poetry of intellect, not that of the Lakers—his theme is the high one of intellectual nature and lofty feeling, not of waggoners and idiot children. Like Milton, he does not love to contemplate clowns and vices, but the loftiest forms of excellence which his fancy can paint. His morality has also reference to the virtues which he admires, and not to the vices of which he is either unconscious, or ashamed. He looks upwards with passionate veneration, and seldom downwards with self-control."

And speaking of Milton, the great object of Shelley's veneration, it is evident that he had made him his model. But Shelley was no puerile copyist, for he had been able to work out for himself a style equally elevated and not less original:—there is, indeed, usually in all his writings, deeply imbued with his individuality, a manner of thought and expression peculiarly his own—unimitated and inimitable. Every line is instinct with mind, and if we see quoted any isolated passage, and no one is more quoted, we are at no loss to detect to whom it belongs. He differed too *toto cælo* from his cotempora-

ries in one essential particular. He wrote not for money, debased himself not by the filthy love of lucre. He never condescended to cater for fame at the sacrifice of his sincerity. He gave full reins to his genius, nor expunged a word or modified an idea to suit the taste or tastelessness of a set or party. His ideas came fresh from the mint of his rich mind—they do not present themselves like coins rubbed by attrition, worn down by use or circulation. What a world of glowing thought would have been lost had he written with the Hell of Critics before his eyes?

“The view of external objects suggests ideas and reflections, as if the parting soul had awakened from a slumber, and saw, through a long vista, glimpses of a communion held with them in a distant past. It is like the first awaking of Adam, and the indolent expression of his emotions. Nature is like a musical instrument, whose tones again are keys to higher things in him, —the morning light causing the statue of Memnon to sound: the shadow of some unseen power of intellectual beauty, deriving much of its interest from its invisibility, floats, though unseen, among his verses, resembling everything unreal and fantastic—the tones and harmonies of evening—the memory of music fled,

Or aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer to the memory.”

Hear what Gutzkow says of him.—“He had a soul like Ariel’s, and of the same character was his poetry—bright and sylph-like, it flutters like a golden fly over the face of the waters. His thoughts trembled as the flame of light trembles. He was like his own lark, and mounts higher and higher as he sings. He drew forth poetry from all things which lay in his way, that others pass by

unheeded and unobserved. His transparent imagination was lit up by thought. Contemplation, reflection lent him the words that he called into his service. All that he wrote sprung from high and noble ideas. Above all others, he knew how to unlock and develop the nature and perfections of his poetry. He could draw out a life from flowers, and even stones—from all that he saw, he discovered pictures for his poetry,—the loveliest similes stream from him in luxuriant fulness. In these his pictures, he could be as lovely as sublime. It is as though we saw the burning Africa of a Humboldt, going over the ice of the Alps. His forms of life raised themselves so high, that we could not follow him: but as a balloon by degrees is lost to the eye, though we cannot see it, we know that it is there.” It has been objected by a Scotch philosopher, that Shelley had a passion for reforming the world. To this he replies,—“I acknowledge that I have. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions *solely* to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system of the theory of human life.

“My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers, with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence, aware, that until the mind can love and admire, and trust and hope and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life, which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness.”¹

It has been said by an able writer, from whom we have already quoted, that a man can only be understood by his

¹ This reply to a remark in Forsyth's *Principles of Moral Science* is taken, with a reasonable approach to accuracy, from the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*.

peers, and his peers are few. The great man is also necessarily a reformer in some shape or other. Every reformer has to combat with existing prejudices and deep-rooted passions. To cut his own path, he must displace the rubbish that encumbers it. He is therefore in opposition to his fellow men, and attacks their interests. Blinded by prejudice, by passion, and by interest, they cannot see the excellence of him they oppose, and hence it is, as Heine has admirably said,—“Everywhere that a great soul gives utterance to his thoughts, there is Golgotha.”

It is not to his general system of *Æsthetics* to which I would extend my remarks, so much as to his theory of Intellectual Beauty and Universal Love, a theory which he interweaves in the woof of his poetry, and that indeed forms the ground-work of the web. Schiller's Kantism was too cold and obscure—Shelley's Platonism too mystic and ethereal; it admitted of no demonstration, was too profound and visionary to be reduced to reason, was only to be seized by the spirit, only a glimpse of it to be caught by contemplation and abstraction. Schiller wrote a long treatise, to make intelligible his philosophy, embodied in his *Ideal and Actual*, a poem which I never met with more than one German who pretended to explain. Shelley did not condescend to enlighten his readers. Having committed a grave error in penning his Notes to *Queen Mab*, he never ventured on a second experiment, though perhaps his Poems for the general reader more require them, and may furnish abundant materials for some future commentator. His great master, Plato, searching after truth in the greatest heights and lowest depths, often but partially seized it, being defeated by its very vastness; ambitious to reveal it to mankind, he

hesitated not to exhibit it in the form, and with the completeness he best could. It was necessary therefore, that what he but half knew himself, should be imperfect and darkly stated, and dimly comprehended by others. For this reason, his writings are obscure. They will always be obscure, in spite of the labours of the commentators; for a commentary can make them plain only by substituting the reveries of the critic, for the inconsequent reasoning of the original. But Plato did not aim at darkness, any more than Shelley. If any one understood Plato, it was Shelley, and that which appears a wordy mist glowing in rainbow clouds, was to his own mind as clear and palpable as the sublimity of such contemplations was capable of being made. But how few can appreciate or comprehend him,—how inadequate and imperfect is all language, to express the subtilty and volatility of such conceptions of the Deity! To the generality of readers, his Metaphysics are so overlaid and buried beneath a poetic phraseology, that the mind, while it is undoubtedly excited, is left in a pleasing and half bewildered state, with visions of beautiful divine truth floating before it, which it is a vain attempt to arrest and convert to reality.

The fault of his system as the ground-work of life, is, that it requires intellects on a par with his own to receive it.

Platonism, as a poetic medium, as I have already observed, and must be excused for here repeating—very early captivated Shelley.* It contains nothing commonplace—nothing that has been worn threadbare by others; indeed it was an untried field for poetry, a *menstruum* from which he hoped to work out pure ore, but the sediment

* Vide *Prince Athanase*.

of mortality was left in the crucible. It would in the palmy days of Greece, have pleased a sect—have delighted Plato himself; but even at the period when Athens was in her glory, and the spectators at the theatre could enjoy the Chorusses of Sophocles, it would, with all its high qualities, have had, if many admirers, no general popularity. But how speak of Deity and not be lost in the attempt to arrest the slightest shadow of that “Unseen Power,” that Spirit of Love? How can beings, the *Infusoria* of creation, and inhabiting a world which is in the immensity of space but a grain of sand on an horizonless sea-shore, lift their thoughts to the great Author and Ruler of the universe of suns and stars, much less venture, “plumed with strong desire,” to float above this dull earth, and clothe in words themselves too material,—

That light whose smile kindles the universe;
 That beauty in which all things work and move;
 That sustaining love,
 Which through the web of being, blindly wove
 By man and beast, and earth and air and sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst.

The very vagueness therefore, in which Shelley's imagination revelled, and for which he is wrongly blamed, is more the fault of language, than his own—ever the fate of the Finite when speaking of the Infinite. It was a sense of the impossibility, and what he deemed the sacrilege of attempts to materialize God, that made him substitute for the popular representation of a God in the form of man, a pervading principle,—not as Mr. Moore calls it, “some abstract *nonentity* of love and beauty, as a substitute for Deity,” but as an attribute of Deity itself, resolving with Berkley, the whole of creation into spirit. For this reason he has been called an Atheist. It

is true that, in a moment of thoughtless and foolish levity, he in the *Album of the Montanvert*, wrote under his name a Greek line, which I have forgotten, ending with *Αθεοστε*, and which Southey, during his excursion in Switzerland,—he might have been better employed,—treasured up and reproached him with ten years after; but such evidence weighs nothing in comparison with the serious and recorded opinions laid down in his works, and to which momentary foolish freak the purity of his life gave the lie. And speaking of what has been called Atheism, Lord Bacon, no mean authority, says of it in this sense, adopting the words of Plutarch,—“Atheism leaves to man reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and everything that can serve to conduct him to virtue, but *superstition* destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men.” I will also quote a passage from Leigh Hunt, on the subject. He says of Spinoza, Giordano Bruno, and other spirits of undoubted genius and integrity, who have been accused of the same opinion,—“that the Atheism of such men is but a vivid sense of the universe about them, trying to distinguish the mystery of its operations from the ordinary, and as they think pernicious Anthropomorphism, in which our egotism envelopes it;” and speaking of Cenci, he adds, “that the Atheism of such men is the only real Atheism; that is to say, it is the only real disbelief in any great and good thing, physical and moral. For the same reason, there is more Atheism to all intents and purposes of virtuous and useful belief, in some bad religions, however devout, than in some supposed absence of religion; for the good they purpose to themselves does not rise above the level of the world they live in, except in power like a Roman emperor; so that there is nothing to them

really outside the world at last. One act of kindness," he adds, "one impulse of universal benevolence as recommended by the true spirit of Jesus, is more grand and godlike than all the degrading ideas of the Supreme Being, which fear and slavery have tried to build up to heaven. It is a greater going out of ourselves, a higher and wider resemblance to the all-embracing placidity of the universe."

But whatever might be Shelley's speculations on the Nature of the Deity, no one was more fully convinced—and how many who affirm and confess, can question their hearts and say the same?—of the existence of a future state. Byron writing to Mr. Moore, says, (I have not the passage before me, but I give it with sufficient fidelity,)—"You," (meaning Moore, Murray, Hobhouse, &c.,) "were mistaken about Shelley; he *does* believe in an Immortality."¹ What does Shelley himself say, just before his

¹ Byron did say thus much to Moore, in two different letters. He also wrote much more both to Moore and to Murray on their misconceptions of Shelley. His defence of his friend was begun before he lost him, I rejoice to record here. "As to poor Shelley, who is another bugbear to you and the world", he wrote to Moore on the 4th of March 1822, "he is, to my knowledge, the *least* selfish and the mildest of men—a man who has made more sacrifices of his fortune and feelings for others than any I ever heard of. With his speculative opinions I have nothing in common, nor desire to have." Two days later he added: "In your last letter you say, speaking of Shelley, that you would almost prefer the 'damning bigot' to the 'annihilating infidel'. Shelley believes in immortality, however—but this by the way."

After the catastrophe he expressed his views with characteristic vigour and directness of speech.

On the 3rd of August 1822 he wrote to Murray:—"You were all brutally mistaken about Shelley, who was, without exception, the *best* and *least* selfish man I ever knew. I never knew one who was not a beast in comparison."

Five days later, to Moore, in writing about the death of Shelley, he says: "There is thus another man gone, about whom the world was ill-naturedly, and ignorantly, and brutally mistaken. It will, perhaps, do him justice *now*, when he can be no better for it."

And when the winter had had time to cool his regard for his lost friend, had it not been genuine in its way, he still harped on the same string, writing to Murray on the 25th of December 1822—"You are all mistaken about Shelley. You do not know how mild, how tolerant, how good he was in Society; and as perfect a gentleman as ever crossed a drawing-room, when he liked, and where liked."

death, in that sincerity of soul that *shines* through all his writings?—"Perhaps all discontent with the *less*, (to use a Platonic sophism,) supposes the sense of a just claim to the *greater*, and [that] we admirers of *Faust* are in the right road to Paradise. Such a supposition is not more absurd, and is certainly less demoniacal, than that of Wordsworth, where he says,—

This earth,
Which is the world of all of us, and where
We find our happiness, or not at all.

As if after sixty years' suffering here, we were to be roasted alive for sixty millions in Hell, or *charitably annihilated*."¹ I have no opportunity of referring to the context of the passage here quoted, but the deduction which he draws from it is surely a distorted one. Shelley had sought his happiness in other contemplations than filled up the calm and peaceable days of the Poet of Nature, and found it not. He had a glorious imagination, but the fire of his genius burned not peacefully and with a steady flame. It was a glaring and irregular flame, for the branches that it fed it with, were not branches from the

Here I transcribe from Moore's text. The quarto (Vol. ii, 1830, p. 622) and the seventeen-volume edition (Vol. v, 1832, p. 373) both read "when he liked, and where liked," which is much more generous on Byron's part than the reading credited to him in the standard edition of Mr. Prothero (Vol. vi, p. 157), "when he liked, and where *he* liked." The original reading gives the better sense; but I record the last because the editor seems to have had the holograph letter through his hands to make a substantial and very desirable addition to the text.

¹ These remarks are from Shelley's letter of the 10th of April 1822 to John Gisborne. The sentence

about annihilation ends thus—"for sixty million more in hell, or charitably annihilated by a *coup-de-grace* of the bungler who brought us into existence at first." Medwin is certainly more than justified in his mild censure of the distortion of Wordsworth's sense; and the riotous want of high seriousness in all this is hardly worthy of Shelley. He quotes the passage from Wordsworth so imperfectly as to make one suspect that he had merely remembered the trend of the last few lines of those forty which Wordsworth had lent Coleridge for insertion in *The Friend*, where Shelley may possibly have read them as early as 1809. It is, however, likelier that he first saw them as re-

tree of life, but from another tree that grew in Paradise. What must he have felt who wrote "The Invocation to Misery?"—and in reading it, one cannot help reverting in thought to his own words, "The Curse of this life is that *whatever is once known, can never be unknown!*"

Shelley once said to me, that a man was never a Materialist long. That he was much inclined to the opinions of the French school of philosophy, will appear by his life at Oxford, as given by Mr. Hogg; but he was soon dissatisfied (these are his own words,) with such a view of things—with such desolating doctrines, and I regret that Mrs. Shelley should have given publicity to that paper *On a Future State*, written, I doubt not, at a very early period, and before reason and judgment had tended to mature his mind, and led him to the study of

printed in the two beautiful octavo volumes of 1815—*Poems* | by | *William Wordsworth* : | Including | *Lyrical Ballads*, | and the | *Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author*. | With *Additional Poems*, | *A New Preface*, and a *Supplementary Essay*. | ... London ... Longman ... (Vol. ii, pp. 69-71). Here, he would have learnt that the piece headed *French Revolution*, as it appeared to *Enthusiasts at its Commencement*, already printed in *The Friend*, was "a part of the unpublished Poem of which some account is given in the Preface to the *Excursion*." I find it as difficult as Medwin did to reconcile the utterance to Gisborne with Shelley's views about the Revolution and Wordsworth, and prefer to hope he had really forgotten the tendency of the forty lines to which he did violence both of interpretation and of quotation. Had Shelley's genius been sufficiently developed by 1813, such a passage as the following on the beneficent results of the republican upheaval might have graced the pages of *Queen Mab* :—

Not favoured spots alone, but the
whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise—that
which sets
(To take an image which was felt
no doubt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose
full blown.

Then comes the description of the effect of the outburst on all tempers, whether inert or lively, and how—

the Meek and Lofty
Did both find helpers to their heart's
desire ;
And stuff at hand, plastic as they
could wish !
Were called upon to exercise their
skill,
Not in Utopia, subterranean Fields,
Or some secreted Island, heaven
knows where !
But in the very world, which is the
world
Of all of us,—the place where in
the end
We find our happiness, or not at
all !

Plato, and a firm belief in a blessed futurity. "The cold, ungenial, foggy atmosphere of northern metaphysics, was totally unsuited to the ardent temperature of his soul, that soon expanded in the warm, bright, vivifying climate of the southern and eastern philosophy." A sufficient answer to the eloquent, but specious reasoning of Mirabeau, the Materialism of the *Système de la Nature*, so unanswerable to the mere matter-of-fact mind, is given in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. It is the best practical refutation of the maxim, that "there is nothing in the intellect, that was not first in the senses," and of all the sorrowful deductions therefrom; and when we read Shelley's apocalyptic *Triumph of Life*, and the *Epipsychidion*, we are almost inclined to Plato's belief, that all knowledge is but a remembrance of a first existence, revealed to us by the concord of poetry, the original form of the soul.

"That fantastic spirit, which would bind all existence in the visionary chain of intellectual beauty, became in Shelley the centre in which his whole intellectual and sensitive powers were united for its formation and embellishment; and although in painting the romance, the conceits and diversities, the workings and meanderings of a heart penetrated with such an ideal passion, drawing less upon our individual sympathies than on those of social life, he may be liable to a charge of a certain mannerism; there is not the less evident, the delicacy, elasticity, and concentration of a gentle and noble mind, a deep scorn of all that is vulgar and base, and a lofty enthusiasm for liberty and the glory of his country, for science and for letters; and finally, an insatiable longing after an eternal and incorruptible being, which opposed to his persuasion of the misery and nullity of this world, feeds and main-

tains that tension or struggle, that fire at the core, which is the inheritance of all privileged geniuses, the promoters of their age. Hence that restlessness coupled with the disdain of worldly things, that retirement and misanthropy joined to benevolence, and the yearning after love and affection, the pursuit of fame, and the intolerance of contemporary criticism, in conjunction with real and unaffected modesty; and in fine, that contrast of virtue and weakness, which is the inheritance of flesh, so requisite seemingly to level the more sublime capacity with its fellow-creatures, and to inculcate the religious bond of union which Christian charity ought to inspire."

The author of these remarks, who I suspect to have been Carlyle, has thus admirably reconciled the seeming contrarieties of Shelley's character. But in looking back through the long vista of his life,—long I may well say, crowded as it was with so many romantic, so many strange events,—I can call to mind no one of them in which his heart was to blame, though his head might have erred. Three events stand prominently above the rest: his expulsion from Oxford—his disappointment in his first love, and his first unfortunate marriage—a *τρικυμία*, or triple surf of ills; and from these flowed and ramified all the bitter streams that swelled his onward course of life. I shall not trace them back,—they, like Dante's inscription, are marked — "colore oscuro," in these Memorabilia.

There remains little more to add. I think it will appear to all unprejudiced minds, that the following portrait of Shelley, by no means the first I have drawn, though all would be imperfect, will not be either over-coloured or over-varnished. It is to be lamented, as I have already done, that no good resemblance of Shelley exists. His features were

small—the upper part of his face not strictly regular—the eyes unusually prominent, too much so for beauty. His mouth was moulded after the finest modelling of Greek art, and wore an habitual expression of benevolence, and when he smiled, his smile irradiated his whole countenance. His hands were thin, and expressed feeling to the fingers' ends, being such as Vandyke would have loved to paint; his hair profuse, silken, and naturally curling, was at a very early period interspersed with grey. His frame was but a tenement for spirit, and in every gesture and lineament showed that he was a portion of that intellectual beauty, which he endeavoured to deify. He did not look so tall as he was, being nearly five feet eleven, for his shoulders were a little bent by study and ill-health, owing to his being near-sighted, and leaning over his books; and which increased the narrowness of his chest. He had, however, though a delicate, a naturally good constitution, inherited from parents who died one upwards of 90,¹ and the other bordering on it, but which he had impaired at one period of his life by an excessive use of opium, and a Pythagorean diet, which greatly emaciated his system and weakened his digestion. He was twenty-nine when he died, and might have been taken for nineteen, for there was in him a spirit that seemed to defy time and suffering and misfortune. But if life is to be measured by events and

¹ Sir Timothy died in his ninety-first year. Born in September 1753, he lived till April 1844. A letter from Mary Shelley to Claire Clairmont in my possession announces his demise in terms highly complimentary to his constitution. Writing on the 24th of April 1844, she says:—"Poor Sir Tim is gone at last—He died yesterday morning at 6 o'clock. He went gradually out

and died at last without a sigh." How indiscriminating is Nature's beneficence. This brief account of a release from a long and useless life forces on one's mind that beautiful picture of Blake's, illustrating a passage in Blair's *Grave*, "The Death of the Good Old Man." The sun shineth upon the just and the unjust.

activity, he had arrived at a very advanced age. He often said "that he had lived to a hundred," and singularly enough, remarks in one of his books,—“The life of a man of talent who should die in his *thirtieth* year, is, with regard to his own feelings, longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave, who dreams out a century of dulness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties, has rendered himself master of his thoughts, can abstract and generalise amid the lethargy of every-day business; the other can slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise.” Schiller, in his *Apportionment of the World*, a poem taken in a ludicrous sense by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, shews that this world was not made for a poet. If he has, however young, accomplished the task for which he was born,—if he has outworn his earthly clay, and entered into a new state of being here below, then is he ready and fit to depart; and it is best for him—better far than to endure the hollowness, the barrenness, the cold realities of every-day existence. To the poet one day is a thousand years; this little world, of which he himself and his fairy dreams are the sole inhabitants, circles round a sun of his own, brilliant beyond ordinary conceptions, and in an atmosphere to which that of our brightest day here, is but a dim and heavy mist. As he whirls with inconceivable rapidity through immeasurable space, spiritual mysteries are revealed to his view—myriads of spirit-peopled worlds, invisible to others, float far and near in this his own heaven. This Shelley means when he says,—

As from a centre dart thy spirit's might,
Beyond all worlds—until its spacious might

Satiate the vast circumference—then shrink,
Even as a point within our day and night.¹

But what succeeds to this unnatural excitement? a prostration, an exhaustion, physical and psychical, like that of one after the paroxysm of a burning fever. It is like the withered *bouquet* on the bosom of beauty after a ball, or more poetically speaking, in the words of one of the German writers, may be compared, as he compares himself when descending to the realities of life, to a skylark, who when he touches the ground, “grovels in silence and clay.” I have often heard him say that he wished to die young—and he one day opened Plato and read, “It would be delightful to me to die surrounded by my friends—secure of the Inheritance of glory and escaping after *such* an existence as mine, from the decay of mind and body that must soon be my portion.”

Well then might Shelley say that thirty years were a long life to a poet—thirty of such years as had been summed up in the course of his.

Like Socrates, he united the gentleness of the lamb with the wisdom of the serpent—the playfulness of the boy with the profoundness of the philosopher.

In common with Bacon, whom he greatly admired and studied, he was endowed with a raciness of wit and a keen perception of the ridiculous, that shewed itself not in what we call *humour*, that produces a rude and boisterous mirth, but begat a smile of intellectual enjoyment, much more delightful and refined.

In argument—and he loved to indulge in that exercise, that wrestling of the mind—he was irresistible. His voice was low or loud, his utterance slow or hurried,

¹ *Adonais*, xlvii. But for the first for *vast*, too, read *void*, and for as
might the correct reading is *light*; read *to*.

corresponding with the variety in which his thoughts clothed the subject. Byron was so sensible of his inability to cope with him, that he always avoided coming to a trial of their strength in controversy, which he generally cut off with a joke or pun; for Shelley was what Byron could not be, a close, logical, and subtle reasoner, much of which he owed to his early habit of disputation at Oxford, and to his constant study of Plato, whose system of getting his adversary into admissions, and thus entangling him in his own web, he followed. He also owed to Plato the simplicity and lucidity of his style, which he used to call a model for prose. In no individual perhaps was the moral sense ever more completely developed than in Shelley,—in no being was the perception of right and wrong more acute.

His friend Mr. H[ogg]. says, "The biographer," to repeat the words in my preface,¹ "who would take upon himself the pleasing and instructive, but delicate task of composing a faithful history of his whole life, will frequently be compelled to discuss the important question, whether his conduct at certain periods was altogether such as ought to be proposed for imitation; whether he was ever misled by a glowing temperament, something of hastiness in choice, and a certain constitutional impatience; whether, like less gifted mortals, he ever shared in the common feature of mortality—repentance; and to what extent." I think I have in the phases of his history, sufficiently discussed these questions, have shewn how grievously he repented his first hasty marriage—how severely he taxed

¹ It would be instructive, if worth the reader's while, to compare this with the extract in Medwin's Preface, and then with the Magazine of July 1832, p. 67, Hogg's Life, Vol. i, p. 119, or Mr. Streatfeild's

pocket volume (p. 99). Both Medwin's versions are, as usual, inaccurate. The other three are practically identical. Medwin's errors are not very material this time.

himself for its melancholy termination—and how much it cankered and festered the wounds which his sensitive spirit received from the shafts of invidious critics and the persecution of the world.

If any human being was possessed of what I have heard Phrenologists say is so rarely found developed in the human head, conscientiousness, it was Shelley; by which is meant, not doing to others as one would be dealt by—not a mere strict regard to right and justice; but where no such claims existed, the exercise, to his own detriment, of an active and unwearied benevolence. He was unselfish, unworldly, disinterested in the highest degree—he despised the universal idol at which all bow down—gold; he looked upon it as dross, “as the world’s bond of Slavery,” and often and often suffered privations without regret, from his inability to resist appeals to his purse. Indeed he carried his beneficence so far, that Mrs. Shelley says in other but stronger words, that he damaged by it his fortune, and frequently reduced himself to the greatest pecuniary straits. With a generous regard to the interests of his friends, he not only relieved their necessities, but looked to their future interests. He was, it is true, no very clear-sighted politician, for he says to his friend Mr. Gisborne,—“I wish your money out of the Funds; the middle course you speak of [what that was is unexplained] and which will probably take place, will amount, not to your losing all your income, or retaining all, but having the half taken away!” And again: “What gives me *considerable anxiety*, is the continuance of your property in the British Funds *at this crisis of approaching revolution.*” What Shelley means regarding his own affairs is ambiguous. “The best thing we can do, is to save money, and if things take a decided turn, which I am convinced

they will at last, but not perhaps for *two* or *three* years, it will be time for me to assert my rights and preserve my *annuity*."

All this was written in 1819 and 1820. But there is a passage in one of the last letters he ever wrote, which might have been penned at the present moment.—"England appears," he says, "to be in a desperate condition—Ireland still worse; and no class of those who subsist on the public labour, will be persuaded that *their* claims on it must be diminished. But the government must content itself with less taxes, the *landowner must submit to receive less rent*, and the fund-holder a diminished interest, *or they will get nothing*;" and he adds,—"I see little public virtue, and foresee that the contest will be one of *blood and gold*!"

The sincerity of Shelley's speculative opinions was proved by the willingness with which he submitted unflinchingly to obloquy and reproach in order to inculcate them; and he would have undergone the martyrdom he depicts in *Laon and Cythna*, rather than have renounced one tittle of his faith. This sincerity, if it does not form a justification either of his doctrines or his acts, entitles him to our esteem, and disarms our censure. Many a time and oft in reading the poems of Byron, I have been led to regard with equal suspicion the value and sincerity of those opinions. Never have Shelley's works caused me this painful impression. He attributed "the vice and misery of mankind to the degradation of the many for the benefit of the few—to an unnatural state of society—to a general misgovernment in its rulers,—to the superstition and bigotry of a mercenary and insincere priesthood." With a poet's eye he foresaw a millen[n]ium, the perfection of the human

race, when man would be happy, free, and majestic. Loving virtue for its own sake, and not from fear, he thought with Schiller, no other ties were necessary than the restraint imposed by a consciousness of right and wrong implanted in our natures, and could not, or would not see that in the present condition of the world, and in the default of education, such a system was fallacious. His tenets therefore should have been looked upon as those of Owen of Lanark with us, of St. Simon in France, as the aspirations of the philanthropist; and the critic might have said with Byron,

You talk Utopias,¹

instead of calumniating the man, and attributing to his harmless speculations, (harmless from their being beyond the capacities of the *οι πολλοι*,) the desire of corrupting youth, which could with as little justice have been said of him, as it was untrue of Socrates.

He was an advocate for the abolition of the punishment of death, and has left us a short treatise on that subject that is of great value; his principal argument is, the bad effect of public executions, the putting to torture for the amusement of those who may or may not have been injured, the criminal; and he contends that as a measure of punishment strictly so considered, and as an exhibition, which by its known effects on the susceptibility of the sufferer is intended to intimidate the spectators from incurring a similar liability, it is singularly inadequate, and confirms all the unsocial impulses of men;” and he adds, “that those nations among whom the penal

¹ Byron never said any such thing. The admirable phrase “You talk Utopia” (not “Utopias”) is Shelley’s, although in the poem where it occurs—*Julian and Maddalo*,

a *Conversation*, it is put in the mouth, not of Julian, who represents Shelley, but of Maddalo, who represents Byron.

code has been particularly mild, have been distinguished from all others by the rarity of crime, and that governments that derive their institutions from the existence of circumstances of barbarism and violence, with some exceptions, perhaps, are bloody in proportion as they are despotic, and form the manners of their subjects to a sympathy with their own spirit."

Disheartened as he was by his constant failures, and the disappointment of his efforts for the amelioration of the social condition of the working classes, he did not despond or despair. There was an energy in him that rose with oppression, and his last as well as his first aspiration was for the good of his species. And yet, strenuous advocate as he was for political reforms, he was the last to recommend violent measures, and says the thing to fear will be that the change should proceed *too fast*—it must be gradual to be secure. Well would it have been for Germany if this sentiment had found an echo in the minds of the political reformers of 1849, if in the formation of their Constitution they had imitated some of the moderation of the American patriots. Reaction would then have been impossible. But the bow that is overstrained will snap.

Unsoured by the ingratitude of the world, he carried into his solitude no misanthropy, against his persecutors he never breathed a word of resentment or hostility. His critics he despised not, rather he pitied, and said to one, "Grass may grow in wintry weather, as soon as hate in me."¹

¹ Shelley's *Lines to a Critic*, when first posthumously published in No. III of *The Liberal*, were accompanied by an editorial note ending thus:—"which is the better Christian,—the 'religious' reviver of bitter and

repeated calumnies upon one who differs with him in opinion, or the 'profane' philanthropist who can answer in such a spirit?" The first stanza, misquoted by Medwin, really reads thus:—

Suffering at times from tortures the most excruciating, from a complaint that would ultimately have proved fatal, during his worst spasms he never shewed himself peevish, or out of humour.

So good and great, beneficent and wise
 On his high throne,
 How meekly has he borne his faculties,
 How finely shewn
 A model to the irritable race,
 Of generous kindness, courtesy and love.

He was an enemy to all sensuality. The pleasures of the table, that form the *summum bonum* of the herd, were not his pleasures. His diet was that of a hermit, his drink water, and his principal and favourite food, bread. His converse was as chaste as his morals—all grossness he abominated.

De Quincey on Gilfillan, says, that “of the darkest beings we are told they believe and tremble, but that Shelley believed and hated.” Never was there a more unjust aspersion. He was of all men the most sincere, and nothing ever seduced him into falsehood or dissimulation. He *disbelieved*, and hated not.¹ It is also asserted in that review, that when the subject of Christianity was started, “Shelley’s total nature was altered and darkened, and transfiguration fell upon him ;

Honey from silkworms who can
 gather,

Or silk from the yellow bee ?
 The grass may grow in winter
 weather

As soon as hate in me.

¹ In the original edition the reading is “and hated not—not Christ himself, or his doctrines, but Christianity as established in the world, i.e. its teachers.” The second *not* and the few words following it are struck out in the revised

copy. The author did nothing for the helpless conclusion of this paragraph ; nor can I. It must, however, be recorded that De Quincey merely repeats the words of Gilfillan as regards the alleged transfiguration, and that the great essayist in his own person defends the sincerity of Shelley throughout, though most severe on his attitude to Christianity and Jehovah, not, as I think, quite logically. See *Tait’s Magazine*, January 1846, p. 23.

that he who was so gentle became savage, he that breathed by the very lungs of Christianity, that was so merciful, so full of tenderness and pity of humanity, and love and forgiveness, then raved and screamed like an idiot." Such might have occurred immediately after his expulsion, when in Cumberland, and when stung to the quick by what he deemed his cruel wrongs, and when writing the Notes to *Queen Mab*, but when I saw him in 1820 and 1821, I can vouch for his betraying no midsummer madness—such exaggerated and frantic paroxysms of rage.

I cannot help thinking, not to speak of his want of religious education at home, that Shelley's cruel expulsion by the teachers of that gospel which proclaims toleration, and forgiveness of others, produced in a great measure his scepticism, which became more inveterate by the decree of the Court of Chancery, which he calls a "priestly pest;"¹ a decree which severed the dearest tie of humanity—made him childless; that the bitter and merciless review of his *Revolt of Islam* by a divine, and the persecution of his brethren, including Dr. Nott, who left no stone unturned to malign and vilify and blacken his character, hardened him still more in his unbelief; nor can it be denied, that he blindly attributed the *auto da fés*, the Sicilian Vespers, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, the cruelties inflicted on the Hugonots [*sic*], not to mention the horrors committed by Catholics against Protestants, and Protestants against Catholics in our own country, under the name of Christianity,—to Christianity itself. Living for so many years in Italy, did not tend to change his creed. He says in his Preface to *The Cenci*, that "in the mind of an Italian, the Catholic religion is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind adoration, not a rule for moral

¹ To the Lord Chancellor, Stanza 1.

conduct, and has no necessary connection with any one virtue;" and adds,—“that intensely pervading the whole frame of society, it is, according to the temper of the mind it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, never a check,” on which Leigh Hunt remarks,—“that such religions, in furnishing men with excuses and absolution, do but behave with something like decent kindness, for they are bound to do what they can for the vices they produce;” and concludes with, “we can say it with gravity too,—Forgiveness will make its way somehow everywhere, and it is lucky that it will do so. But it would be luckier if systems made less to forgive!”

To such a length did Shelley's hostility to what he calls the popular religion carry him, that he said, “he had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than saved with Paley and Malthus.”* I cannot, indeed, but regret deeply that he who was so liberal, so open to conviction on all subjects, should have been so blinded by prejudice as to say in a letter addressed to C. T. (whoever he might have been) that Christianity is not useful to the world, and that false and pernicious as are the doctrines of the French and material Philosophy, they are better than Christianity. From education and conviction a firm believer in the divine truths of revelation, I have shrunk with abhorrence at the perusal of these passages which deform the Second Volume of his Prose Works. But contradictory as these sentiments are to all I ever heard him utter, and utterly false as such opinions are, I cannot believe that they were seriously his own, but rather that they were penned in order to flatter the *amour propre* of his correspondent, and it furnished me with another proof of the little dependence to be placed on letters as

* Errare, mehercle, malo cum Platone, quam cum istis sentire.—Cicero.

materials for Biography:¹ but Shelley by no means stood alone among poets in his principles or infidelity. Milton was engaged with a party in the destruction of the Church and the Monarchy. Schiller introduced on the stage, as we exhibit the priests and incense of the Gods of Greece, the most sacred rites of the church. His æsthetic philosophy was anything but Christian. Göthe never made a mystery of his unbelief. Almost all the great thinkers of Germany are, with the last object of their idolatry, Pantheists. Such, in their early career, were Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth, not only pantheists but propagators for a time of the doctrines propounded by Godwin and thoroughly imbued with his democracy. But it was allowed to the poets and painters of Greece and Rome, to dare anything, and shall we in the nineteenth century not be ashamed of intolerance? Is Milton's Arianism, the Titanic language of his Satan, a reason for our not reading the *Paradise Lost*? "A language, according to Leigh Hunt, involving so much irreverence to the greatest of beings, that it is painful to seem to give it countenance." Are Schiller and Göthe less esteemed, are their works less popular, on account of their persuasions? Has there ever been a finger raised against them in their own or any other country? Are not *Joan d'Arc*, *Marie Stuart*, and *Faust*, still represented on the German stage?

¹ The biographer was suddenly struck a little more than usually blind here by the overstrained orthodoxy with which he approached the close of life. He goes accordingly right off the rails, throws his intelligence to the four winds, and with it his consistency as a narrator and appreciator—he who insists so much on Shelley's sincerity. It was clear enough to the mind of Medwin undebauched that

Shelley could not have assumed a degree of heterodoxy in expression to flatter anyone's self-love, and that Horace Smith's—for "C. T." = "Horace Smith"—needed flattering with anti-christian expressions is inconceivable. I should like to relieve the chronicler of the odium of this passage by striking it out; but editorial obligation as I conceive it is a bar to so merciful an act.

Has not the latter drama been translated repeatedly into English in spite of the daring Prologue in Heaven, and the mockery of all things sacred contained in that surprising effort of genius? And shall Shelley be less read because when a boy (what did Moore and Southey write in their youth?) he wrote *Queen Mab*? What was Byron? Are not *Cain* and *Don Juan* in every library? and shall we ostracise from ours, on account of passages which do not square with our own views, the noblest, the sublimest, and sweetest effusions of genius? Let us not stand alone among the nations, or be marked with the finger of scorn by the Americans and Germans, for refusing our tribute to his genius.

“In my father’s house,” says our Saviour, “are many mansions,” which, though the commentators differ in the interpretation of the text, obviously means, that there are many quiet resting places in heaven, for those differing in opinion on religion, and there it may be hoped with confidence, that Shelley has found “an abode, where the Eternal are.” How sublime are his own words,—

Death is the veil which those who live call life,
They sleep—and it is lifted.¹

In having thus summed up my own sentiments on Shelley, if there should be any one who thinks I have taken a too poetical view of his character, let him read, and inwardly digest the following passage of one* of the most elegant of the American writers, and who has well studied the human heart. It is worthy of being inscribed in letters of gold.

* Longfellow.

¹ The reader will recall the Sonnet of 1818 beginning with—
Lift not the painted veil which
those who live
Call Life. . . .

wherein it is said that the poet
“knew one who had lifted it . . .
a spirit that strove for truth, and
like the Preacher found it not.”

“Let us tread lightly on the Poet’s grave! For my part I confess that I have not the heart to take him from the general crowd of erring, sinful men, and judge him harshly. The little I have seen of the world, and know of the history of mankind, teaches me to look upon the errors of others in sorrow, and not in anger. When I take the history of one poor heart that has sinned and suffered, and represent to myself the struggles and temptations it has passed, the brief pulsations of joy, the feverish inquietude of hope and fear, the tears of regret, the feebleness of purpose, the pressure of want, the desertion of friends, the scorn of a world that has little charity, the desolation of the soul’s sanctuary, and threatening voices within,—health gone, happiness gone, even hope that stays the longest with us, gone; I would fain leave the erring soul of my fellow man with Him from whose hands it came.”

FINIS

APPENDIX

I. EARLY LETTERS OF SHELLEY.¹

[No. 1.]

Monday, July 18, 1803.

DEAR KATE,—We have proposed a day at the pond next Wednesday, and if you will come to-morrow morning I would be much obliged to you, and if you could any how bring Tom over to stay all the night, I would thank you. We are to have a cold dinner over at the pond, and come home to eat a bit of roast chicken and peas at about nine o'clock. Mama depends upon your bringing Tom over to-morrow, and if you don't we shall be very much disappointed. Tell the bearer not to forget to bring me a fairing, which is some gingerbread, sweet-meat, hunting-nuts, and a pocket-book. Now I end.

I am not

Your obedient servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Miss Kate,

Horsham,

Sussex.

Free.

P. B. Shelley.

[No. 2.]

DEAR SIR,—I understand that to obviate future difficulties, I ought now to make marriage settlements. I entrust this to your management, if you will be kind enough to take the matter in hand. In the course of three weeks or a month, I shall take the precaution of being remarried, before which I believe these adjustments will be necessary. I wish the sum settled on my wife in case of my death to be £700 per annum. The maiden name is Harriett Westbrook[e] with two T's—

¹ The ten letters forming the bulk of Section I in the Appendix are those which Medwin inserted at the end of the first volume of the

work as issued by Newby in 1847. Letters No. 11, No. 12, and No. 13 are special to the present edition.

Harriett. Will you be so kind as to address me at Mr. Westbrook[e]'s, 23, Chapel-street, Grosvenor-square? We most probably go to London to-morrow. We shall see Whitton, when I shall neither forget your good advice, nor cease to be grateful for it. With kind remembrances to your family,

Yours most gratefully,

Cuckfield, Oct. 21, 1811.
To T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham.

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[No. 3.]

Keswick, Cumberland.¹

Nov. 26, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR,—We are now in this lovely spot, where for a time we have fixed our residence. The rent of our cottage, furnished, is £1 10s. per week. We do not intend to take up our abode here for a perpetuity, but should wish to have a house in Sussex. Perhaps you would look out for us. Let it be in some picturesque, retired place—St. Leonard's Forest, for instance. Let it not be nearer to London than Horsham, nor near any *populous* manufacturing town. We do not covet either a propinquity to *barracks*. Is there any possible method of raising money without exorbitant interest until my coming of age? I hear that you and my father have had a rencontre. I was surprised that he dared to attack you, but men always hate those whom they have injured; this hatred was, I suppose, a stimulant which supplied the want of courage. Whitton has written to me to state the impropriety of my letter to my mother and sister; this letter I have returned, with a passing remark on the back of it. I find that affair on which those letters spoke is become the general gossip of the idle newsmongers of Horsham. They give me credit of having invented it. They do my invention much honour, but greatly discredit their own penetration.

My kind remembrances to all friends, believe me, dear sir,

Yours most truly,

P. B. SHELLEY.

We dine with the Duke of N. at Graystock this week.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham,
Sussex.

¹ Consult page 110 on the subject of this letter and the next, and in particular on the biographer's treatment of No. 4.

[No. 4.]

Keswick, Cumberland,

Nov. 30, 1811.

MY DEAR SIR,—When I last saw you, you mentioned the possibility, alluding at the same time to the imprudence, of raising money even at my present age, at seven per cent. *We are now so poor as to be actually in danger of every day being deprived of the necessities of life.* In two years, you hinted that I could obtain money at legal interest. My poverty, and not my will consents (as Romeo's apothecary says), when I request you to tell me the readiest method of obtaining this. I could repay the principal and interest, on my coming of age, with very little detriment to my ultimate expectations. In case you see obvious methods of effecting this, I would thank you to remit me a small sum for immediate expenses; if not, on no account do so, as some degree of hazard must attend all my acts, under age, and I am resolved never again to expose you to suffer for my imprudence. Mr. Westbrook[e] has sent me a small sum, with an intimation, that we are to expect no more; this suffices for the immediate discharge of a few debts; and it is nearly with our very last guinea, that we visit the Duke of N., at Graystock, to-morrow. We return to Keswick on Wednesday. I have very few hopes from this visit. That reception into Abraham's bosom appeared to me to be the consequence of some infamous concessions, which are, I suppose, synonymous with duty.—Love to all.

My dear Sir,

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham,
Sussex.

Yours most truly,
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[No. 5.]

Dublin, No. 17, Grafton Street,

March 20th, 1812.¹

MY DEAR SIR,—The tumult of business and travelling has prevented my addressing you before.

I am now engaged with a literary friend in the publication of a voluminous History of Ireland, of which two hundred and fifty pages are already printed, and for the completion of which, I wish to raise two hundred and fifty pounds. I could obtain undeniable security for its payment at the expiration of eighteen months. Can you tell me how I ought to proceed? *The work will produce great profits.* As

¹ See page 114 (note).

you will see by the Lewes paper, I am in the midst of overwhelming engagements. My kindest regards to all your family. Be assured I shall not forget you or them.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham,
Sussex,
England.

My dear Sir,
Yours very truly,
P. B. SHELLEY.

[No. 6.]

Nantgwillt, Rhayader, Radnorshire,
April 25th, 1812.

MY DEAR SIR,—After all my wanderings, I have at length arrived at Nantgwillt, near Mr. T. Grove's. I could find no house throughout the north of Wales, and the merest chance has conducted me to this spot. Mr. Hooper, the present proprietor, is a bankrupt, and his assignees are empowered to dispose of the lease, stock, and furniture, which I am anxious to purchase. They will all be taken at a valuation, and Mr. T. Grove has kindly promised to find a proper person to stand on my side. The assignees are willing to give me credit for eighteen months, or longer; but being a minor, my signature is invalid. Would you object to join your name in my bond, or rather, to pledge yourself for my standing by the agreement when I come of age? The sum is likely to be six or seven hundred pounds.

The farm is about two hundred acres, one hundred and thirty acres arable, the rest wood and mountain. The house is a very good one, the rent ninety-eight pounds, which appears abundantly cheap. My dear sir, now pray answer me by return of post, as I am at present in an unpleasant state of suspense with regard to this affair, as so eligible an opportunity for settling in a cheap, retired, romantic spot will scarcely occur again.

Remember me most kindly to all your family.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,
Horsham, Sussex.

Yours very truly,
P. B. SHELLEY.

[No. 7.]

[Post-mark, 16th June, 1813.]

Cooke's Hotel, Albemarle Street.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is some time since I have addressed you, but as our interests are interwoven in a certain degree by a community of disappointment, I shall do so now, without ceremony.

I was desirous of seeing you on the subject of the approaching

expiration of my minority, but hourly expecting Mrs. Shelley's confinement, I am not able to leave her for the present.

I wished to know whether at that epoch, you would object to see me through the difficulties with which I am surrounded.

You may depend on my grateful remembrance of what you have already done for me, and suffered on my account, whether you consent or refuse to add to the list of my obligations to you. The late negotiations between myself and my father have been abruptly broken off by the latter. This I do not regret, as his caprice and intolerance would not have suffered the wound to heal.

I know that I am the heir to large property. Now are the papers to be seen? have you the least doubt but that I am the safe heir to a large landed property? Have you any certain knowledge on the subject?

If you are coming to town soon, I should be most happy to see you; or after Mrs. Shelley's confinement, I will visit you at Horsham.

Mrs. S. unites in her remembrances to all your family.

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[No. 8.]

Cooke's Hotel, Dover Street,

June 21st, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR,—Mrs. Shelley's confinement may take place in one day, or not until six weeks. In this state of uncertainty, I would unwillingly leave town even for a few hours. I therefore should be happy to see you so soon as you could make a journey to town convenient. Depend upon it, that no artifice of my father's shall seduce me to take a life interest in the estate. I feel with sufficient force, that I should not by such conduct be guilty alone of injustice to myself, but to those who have assisted me by kind offices and advice during my adversity.

Mrs. S. unites with me in best wishes to you and yours.

My dear Sir,

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,

Your very obliged,

Horsham,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Sussex.

[No. 9.]

Cooke's Hotel, Dover Street,

June 28, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am happy to inform you, that Mrs. Shelley has been safely delivered of a little girl, and is now rapidly recovering.

G g 2

I would not leave her in her present state, and therefore still consider your proposal of fixing the interview in London as the most eligible.

I need not tell you that the sooner I have the pleasure of seeing you, the sooner my mind, and that of my wife, will be relieved from a most unpleasant feeling of embarrassment and uncertainty. You may entirely confide in my secrecy and prudence.

I desire my very best remembrances to all yours, and remain,

My dear Sir,

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,

Horsham, Sussex.

Very faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[No. 10.]

MY DEAR SIR,—I shall be most happy to see you, at six o'clock, to dinner, to-morrow. I think this plan is the best. Mrs. Shelley unites with me in best remembrances to all your family.

I remain,

Cooke's Hotel, Dover Street.

July 6th, 1813.

T. C. Medwin, Esq.,

Horsham, Sussex.

Yours very faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[No. 11.]

Field Place Ap. 22¹

2 o'clock Sunday mor

Hall Chamber x

My dear Graham

Enclosed I send you some lines which I can assure you are natural, & which I believe I owe you, as you wanted at Xmass to try your powers of composition with some Poetry of mine—

P.B.S

How swiftly through Heaven's wide expanse

Bright days resplendent colors fade

How sweetly does the moonbeam's glance

With silver tint St. Irvynes glade

¹ In printing this mutilated letter, referred to at p. 54 (*note*), I have followed the manuscript literally where it is undamaged. The ends of certain lines in the poem, having disappeared, have been completed by supplying the missing final letters &c.: the lines referred to are the fourth in stanzas v, vi, vii,

viii, ix, and x, the second in vii, and the third in x. In the last paragraph of the letter, where a considerable piece has been torn off, some conjectural restorations have been inserted between hooks for the reader's convenience, to complete as far as possible the fairly obvious sense.

No cloud along the spangled air
 Is borne upon the evening breeze,
 How solemn is the scene, how fair
 The moonbeam's rest upon the trees
 Yon dark gray turret glimmers white
 Upon it sits the mournful owl
 Along the stillness of the night
 Her melancholy shriekings roll
 But not alone on Irvyne's tower
 The moonbeam pours its silver ray;
 It gleam's upon the ivied bower
 It dances in the cascade's spray
 For there a youth with darkned brow
 His long lost love is heard to mourn
 He vents his swelling bosoms woe—
 "Ah! when will hours like those retur[n?]
 O'er this torn soul, o'er this frail form
 Let feast the fiends of tortured love
 Let lower dire fate's terrific storm,
 I would the pangs of death to prove[.]
 Ah! why do prating priests suppose,
 That God can give the wretch reli[ef,]
 Can stop the bosom's bursting woes
 Or { calm } the tide of frantic grief[?]
 { stop }
 Within me burns a raging Hell
 [line cut away with foot of leaf]
 Fate I defy thy fiercer spell
 And long for stern death's welcome ho[ur.]
 No power of Earth, of Hell or Heaven
 Can still the tumult of my brain
 The power to none save _____'s given
 To { calm } my bosom's frantic pain.
 { take }
 Ah why do darkning shades conceal
 The hour when man must cease to be?
 Why may not human minds unveil
 The dark shade of futurity?

Of course I communica[te these lines to] you as to a friend in [who,
 I can con]fide will not shew [them to any member] of my family or

o[ther person] published the t . . . are addressed a . . . individuality.—[They were written, I can] assure you with [sincerity and] impulse on the [feelings which] they describe—you may set them to music if you think them worth it—I shall see you in London, I must indeed, as you are the only friend to whom I *can* communicate what perhaps I shall wish to consult with you upon. Burn this letter as soon as you have taken anything from it you may wish & believe me

Yours most devotedly

P B S

[No. 12.]

May 20 1810.¹

My dear Graham—

It is never my custom to make new friends whom I cannot own to my old ones, and though I may be very far gone in Romance, I am not yet so far over head and ears in heroics, but that I have knowledge enough of the world, to perceive that no disinterested motive can lead a man to enter into a friendship with another with whose temper, capacity and talents he is most certainly ignorant. If he takes me for anyone whose character I have drawn in Zastrozzi he is mistaken quite——

The words as far as I can recollect after the crayons, were—

‘I beg leave, Sir, to take this opportunity of offering my thanks for your very great civility’

I am &c — —

Now if there was anything in this sentence, merely expressive of my gratitude for his politeness as one gentleman to another, if there was anything I say which could authorize the very sentimental and unexpected answer, I am willing to confess myself to blame——Believe me most thankful for your advice concerning it & that I take it unreservedly, for however cautious I may be in contracting new friendships, it shall never be said but that I am faithful to my old ones—How now to answer him, will you tell me that too—? I am certainly always the sport of extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances! I wonder if everyone that writes a romance draws such a train of eccentric events after him——

The crayons will do very well, will you pay Merle for them—I wish you would come to Eton, but do not put yourself out of your way, and we will settle.

Ever yours faithfully

P. B. Shelley——

¹ This letter, referred to at p. 87, but without the name of the place bears the post-mark “May 21, 1810”, where it was posted.

I act unlike every other mortal enough in all conscience, without seeking for more Quixotish adventures,—such as contracting heroic sentiments—Heavens! if I had *condescended* as he calls it what a long letter I should have had! by to-day's Post.

Edward Fergus Graham Esq.,
29 Vine Street
Piccadilly
London.

[No. 13.]

Eton Coll.

May 29, 1810¹

My dear Graham

Another letter from Merle & such a high flyer, perhaps you have not lately seen. It takes up an entire sheet in his small writing. Will he not leave me alone? ~~I shall write to him to-day.~~ No I shall not write to him at all. I shall leave him entirely to his own ideas.

He talks about his “proud youth disdaining”, & it is altogether so mysterious & unintelligible an epistle, that not knowing how the devil to answer it I shall leave it quite alone.

It says he wishes to conceal his sorrows & his guilt. May I ask you, Graham, out of curiosity, what he means by either? in short I am resolved to have no more to do with him, not even for drawing utensils, as I fear the man has some deep scheme. Where does he come from, & who is he?

Will you write to Mary under cover to Miss Pigeon, Clapham Common, Surrey, where I wish you to send the books, also for Mary. They are all very well, and would be delighted at a letter from you.

My mother has had a violent bilious fever; she is now getting much better.

I had a letter from Harriet this morning in which she tells me the crayons will do very well. Will you pay Merle the 11s, for I do not like to owe that kind of man anything, though I believe he is a liberal fellow; but I have seen too much of the world not to suspect his motives.

Your most affectionate
P. B. Shelley

¹ This letter also is post-marked, the date being the 30th of May 1810.

See note to the previous letter, No. 12, and refer to p. 87.

Will you come on the 4th? How is my father?

In the name of the most merciful God—"Arabian Nights." Will you send a Zastrozzi directed to the Revd.—Sayer, Leominster, near Arundel. Send it directly. I have written to say it was coming.

Edward Fergus Graham Esq.
29 Vine Street, Piccadilly
London.

II. FRANKENSTEIN.¹

SHELLEY'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed, by Dr. Darwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence. I shall not be supposed as according the remotest degree of serious faith to such an imagination; yet, in assuming it as the basis of a work of fancy, I have not considered myself as merely weaving a series of supernatural terrors. The event on which the interest of the story depends is exempt from the dis-

¹ See pages 156 to 159. Shelley's paper on *Frankenstein*, written in or about 1817 in the reviewer's first person plural, was published in *The Athenæum* for the 10th of November 1832, then in *The Shelley Papers* (1833), and again in this *Life of Shelley* as issued in 1847. Medwin is of course responsible for all three texts. Mary Shelley, naturally enough, did not include it in what he calls the *Prose Works* (the *Essays, Letters, &c.*). When publishing as complete an edition of Shelley's prose compositions as I could in 1880, I used the first two texts. In the present volume three amendments of the more or less corrupt version of 1847 have been made. (1) In line 9 of the review the *this* of *The Shelley Papers* has been substituted for the before *judgment*; (2) *pathos* has been substituted for *father's* (as in 1880, but no longer conjecturally) in line 17 of p. 158; and (3) the *single* of

The Shelley Papers has been substituted for the nonsensical *simple* in the next line; but *soured* for *social* in the eighth line from the foot of the page, a reading suggested by C. J. Monro in *The Academy* for the 11th of December 1880, has not been adopted, though plausible. Mr. Monro pointed out that Shelley's phraseology in the words *without the consequences of disease*, used in *The Banquet*, was identical with which led to the consequences of his being a social nature in the *Frankenstein* review,—*social* in this context being rather unconvincing. However, that is what Shelley wrote, The late Dr. Garnett had Shelley's draft of the paper, in a little book given to him by Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, after I published the *Prose Works*. The paper was boldly written; and the readings *pathos, single, and social* were absolutely unquestionable.

advantages of a mere tale of spectres or enchantment. It was recommended by the novelty of the situations which it develops; and, however impossible as a physical fact, affords a point of view to the imagination for the delineating of human passions more comprehensive and commanding than any which the ordinary relations of existing events can yield.

I have thus endeavoured to preserve the truth of the elementary principles of human nature, while I have not scrupled to innovate upon their combinations. The *Iliad*, the tragic poetry of Greece,—Shakspeare, in the *Tempest* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*,—and most especially Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, conform to this rule; and the most humble novelist, who seeks to confer or receive amusement from his labours, may, without presumption, apply to prose fiction a licence, or rather a rule, from the adoption of which so many exquisite combinations of human feeling have resulted in the highest specimens of poetry.

The circumstance on which my story rests was suggested in casual conversation. It was commenced, partly as a source of amusement, and partly as an expedient for exercising any untried resources of mind. Other motives were mingled with these, as the work proceeded. I am by no means indifferent to the manner in which whatever moral tendencies exist in the sentiments or characters it contains shall affect the reader; yet my chief concern in this respect has been limited to the avoiding the enervating effects of the novels of the present day, and to the exhibition of the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue. The opinions which naturally spring from the character and situation of the hero are by no means to be conceived as existing always in my own conviction; nor is any inference justly to be drawn from the following pages as prejudicing any philosophical doctrine of whatever kind.

It is a subject also of additional interest to the author, that this story was begun in the majestic region where the scene is principally laid, and in society which cannot cease to be regretted. I passed the summer of 1816 in the environs of Geneva. The season was cold and rainy, and in the evenings we crowded around a blazing wood fire, and occasionally amused ourselves with some German stories of ghosts, which happened to fall into our hands. These tales excited in us a playful desire of imitation. Two other friends (a tale from the pen of one of whom would be far more acceptable to the public than any thing I can ever hope to produce) and myself agreed to write each a story, founded on some supernatural occurrence.

The weather, however, suddenly became serene ; and my two friends left me on a journey among the Alps, and lost, in the magnificent scenes which they present, all memory of their ghostly visions. The following tale is the only one which has been completed.

MARY SHELLEY'S INTRODUCTION TO THE EDITIONS
OF 1831 AND LATER.

THE Publishers of the Standard Novels, in selecting "Frankenstein" for one of their series, expressed a wish that I should furnish them with some account of the origin of the story. I am the more willing to comply, because I shall thus give a general answer to the question, so very frequently asked me—"How I, then a young girl, came to think of, and to dilate upon, so very hideous an idea?" It is true that I am very averse to bringing myself forward in print ; but as my account will only appear as an appendage to a former production, and as it will be confined to such topics as have connection with my authorship alone, I can scarcely accuse myself of a personal intrusion.

It is not singular that, as the daughter of two persons of distinguished literary celebrity, I should very early in life have thought of writing. As a child I scribbled ; and my favourite pastime, during the hours given me for recreation, was to "write stories." Still I had a dearer pleasure than this, which was the formation of castles in the air—the indulging in waking dreams—the following up trains of thought, which had for their subject the formation of a succession of imaginary incidents. My dreams were at once more fantastic and agreeable than my writings. In the latter I was a close imitator—rather doing as others had done, than putting down the suggestions of my own mind. What I wrote was intended at least for one other eye—my childhood's companion and friend ; but my dreams were all my own ; I accounted for them to nobody ; they were my refuge when annoyed—my dearest pleasure when free.

I lived principally in the country as a girl, and passed a considerable time in Scotland. I made occasional visits to the more picturesque parts ; but my habitual residence was on the blank and dreary northern shores of the Tay, near Dundee. Blank and dreary on retrospection I call them ; they were not so to me then. They were the eyry of freedom, and the pleasant region where unheeded I could commune with the creatures of my fancy. I wrote then—but in a most common-place style. It was beneath the trees of the grounds belonging to our house, or on the bleak sides of the woodless

mountains near, that my true compositions, the airy flights of my imagination, were born and fostered. I did not make myself the heroine of my tales. Life appeared to me too common-place an affair as regarded myself. I could not figure to myself that romantic woes or wonderful events would ever be my lot; but I was not confined to my own identity, and I could people the hours with creations far more interesting to me at that age, than my own sensations.

After this my life became busier, and reality stood in place of fiction. My husband, however, was from the first, very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage, and enrol myself on the page of fame. He was for ever inciting me to obtain literary reputation, which even on my own part I cared for then, though since I have become infinitely indifferent to it. At this time he desired that I should write, not so much with the idea that I could produce any thing worthy of notice, but that he might himself judge how far I possessed the promise of better things hereafter. Still I did nothing. Travelling, and the cares of a family, occupied my time; and study, in the way of reading, or improving my ideas in communication with his far more cultivated mind, was all of literary employment that engaged my attention.

In the summer of 1816, we visited Switzerland, and became the neighbours of Lord Byron. At first we spent our pleasant hours on the lake, or wandering on its shores; and Lord Byron, who was writing the third canto of *Childe Harold*, was the only one among us who put his thoughts upon paper. These, as he brought them successively to us, clothed in all the light and harmony of poetry, seemed to stamp as divine the glories of heaven and earth, whose influences we partook with him.

But it proved a wet, ungenial summer, and incessant rain often confined us for days to the house. Some volumes of ghost stories, translated from the German into French, fell into our hands. There was the History of the Inconstant Lover, who, when he thought to clasp the bride to whom he had pledged his vows, found himself in the arms of the pale ghost of her whom he had deserted. There was the tale of the sinful founder of his race, whose miserable doom it was to bestow the kiss of death on all the younger sons of his fated house, just when they reached the age of promise. His gigantic, shadowy form, clothed like the ghost in Hamlet, in complete armour, but with the beaver up, was seen at midnight, by the moon's fitful beams, to advance slowly along the gloomy avenue. The shape was lost beneath the shadow of the castle walls; but soon a gate swung back, a step was heard, the door of the chamber opened, and he advanced to the

couch of the blooming youths, cradled in healthy sleep. Eternal sorrow sat upon his face as he bent down and kissed the forehead of the boys, who from that hour withered like flowers snapt upon the stalk. I have not seen these stories since then; but their incidents are as fresh in my mind as if I had read them yesterday.

"We will each write a ghost story," said Lord Byron; and his proposition was acceded to. There were four of us. The noble author began a tale, a fragment of which he printed at the end of his poem of Mazeppa. Shelley, more apt to embody ideas and sentiments in the radiance of brilliant imagery, and in the music of the most melodious verse that adorns our language, than to invent the machinery of a story, commenced one founded on the experiences of his early life. Poor Polidori had some terrible idea about a skull-headed lady, who was so punished for peeping through a key-hole—what to see I forget—something very shocking and wrong of course; but when she was reduced to a worse condition than the renowned Tom of Coventry, he did not know what to do with her, and was obliged to despatch her to the tomb of the Capulets, the only place for which she was fitted. The illustrious poets also, annoyed by the platitude of prose, speedily relinquished their uncongenial task.

I busied myself to *think of a story*,—a story to rival those which had excited us to this task. One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, and awaken thrilling horror—one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart. If I did not accomplish these things, my ghost story would be unworthy of its name. I thought and pondered—vainly. I felt that blank incapability of invention which is the greatest misery of authorship, when dull Nothing replies to our anxious invocations. *Have you thought of a story?* I was asked each morning, and each morning I was forced to reply with a mortifying negative.

Every thing must have a beginning, to speak in Sanchean phrase; and that beginning must be linked to something that went before. The Hindoos give the world an elephant to support it, but they make the elephant stand upon a tortoise. Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in creating out of void, but out of chaos; the materials must, in the first place, be afforded: it can give form to dark, shapeless substances, but cannot bring into being the substance itself. In all matters of discovery and invention, even of those that appertain to the imagination, we are continually reminded of the story of Columbus and his egg. Invention consists

in the capacity of seizing on the capabilities of a subject, and in the power of moulding and fashioning ideas suggested to it.

Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. They talked of the experiments of Dr. Darwin, (I speak not of what the Doctor really did, or said that he did, but, as more to my purpose, of what was then spoken of as having been done by him,) who preserved a piece of vermicelli in a glass case, till by some extraordinary means it began to move with voluntary motion. Not thus, after all, would life be given. Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.

Night waned upon this talk; and even the witching hour had gone by, before we retired to rest. When I placed my head on my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision—I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handywork, horror-stricken. He would hope that, left to itself, the slight spark of life which he had communicated would fade; that this thing, which had received such imperfect animation, would subside into dead matter; and he might sleep in the belief that the silence of the grave would quench for ever the transient existence of the hideous corpse which he had looked upon as the cradle of life. He sleeps; but he is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains, and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes.

I opened mine in terror. The idea so possessed my mind, that a thrill of fear ran through me, and I wished to exchange the ghastly image of my fancy for the realities around. I see them still; the very room, the dark *parquet*, the closed shutters, with the moonlight

struggling through, and the sense I had that the glassy lake and white high Alps were beyond. I could not so easily get rid of my hideous phantom; still it haunted me. I must try to think of something else. I recurred to my ghost story,—my tiresome unlucky ghost story! O! if I could only contrive one which would frighten my reader as I myself had been frightened that night!

Swift as light and as cheering was the idea that broke in upon me. "I have found it! What terrified me will terrify others; and I need only describe the spectre which had haunted my midnight pillow." On the morrow I announced that I had *thought of a story*. I began that day with the words, *It was on a dreary night of November*, making only a transcript of the grim terrors of my waking dream.

At first I thought but of a few pages—of a short tale; but Shelley urged me to develope the idea at greater length. I certainly did not owe the suggestion of one incident, nor scarcely of one train of feeling, to my husband, and yet but for his incitement, it would never have taken the form in which it was presented to the world. From this declaration I must except the preface. As far as I can recollect, it was entirely written by him.

And now, once again, I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper. I have an affection for it, for it was the offspring of happy days, when death and grief were but words, which found no true echo in my heart. Its several pages speak of many a walk, many a drive, and many a conversation, when I was not alone; and my companion was one whom, in this world, I shall never see more. But this is for myself; my readers have nothing to do with these associations.

I will add but one word as to the alterations I have made. They are principally those of style. I have changed no portion of the story, nor introduced any new ideas or circumstances. I have mended the language where it was so bald as to interfere with the interest of the narrative; and these changes occur almost exclusively in the beginning of the first volume.¹ Throughout they are entirely confined to such parts as are mere adjuncts to the story, leaving the core and substance of it untouched.

M. W. S.

London, October 15. 1831.

¹ The first edition (1818), now a rare book, is in three thin volumes, printed by Macdonald and Son of Cloth Fair, London, and published by Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, and Jones of Finsbury Square. Dedicated to William Godwin, it bore on the title-page

of each volume an epigraph from *Paradise Lost*:

Did I request thee, Maker, from
my clay
To mould me man? Did I soli-
cit thee
From darkness to promote me?

III. CHANCERY PAPERS RELATING TO SHELLEY'S CHILDREN BY HARRIETT.¹

THE CHILDREN'S PETITION DATED 8 JANUARY 1817

To the Right Honorable John Lord Eldon Baron Eldon of Eldon in the
County of Durham Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.

Humbly complaining shew unto your Lordship your Orators Eliza
Ianthé Shelley an Infant of the age of three years and a half or there-
abouts and Charles Bysshe Shelley an Infant of the age of two years
or thereabouts by John Westbrooke of Chapel Street in the Parish of
Saint George Hanover Square in the County of Middlesex Esquire
their maternal grandfather and next friend. That in the month of
August One thousand eight hundred and eleven Percy Bysshe Shelley
Esquire the father of your Orators married Harriett Westbrooke who
was the daughter of the said John Westbrooke and that your said
Orators are the only Issue of the said Marriage and that after the
Birth of your Orator Eliza Ianthe Shelley and while the said Harriett
Shelley was pregnant with your Orator Charles Bysshe Shelley the
said Percy Bysshe Shelley became acquainted with a Mr. Godwin the
author of a work called Political Justice and other Works and with
Mary Godwin his daughter and that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley
about three years ago deserted his said wife and unlawfully cohabited
with the said Mary Godwin And that thereupon the said Harriett
Shelley returned to the house of her said father the said John
Westbrooke and brought your infant Orator Eliza Ianthe Shelley
with her and was afterwards delivered at the said house of your
Orator Charles Bysshe Shelley and they have ever since continued
and are now in the custody and under the care and protection of your
Orator John Westbrooke and his Daughter Elizabeth Westbrooke the
Sister of the said Harriett Shelley and a Defendant hereinafter named
And your Orators shew that from the time the said Harriett Shelley

¹ These papers are the documents referred to in the footnote at page 182 *ante*. The Cause is generally known as "Shelley v. Westbrooke"; and the usual full formal heading of these papers is "In Chancery Between Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley

Infants by John Westbrooke their maternal Grandfather and next Friend—Plaintiffs—and Elizabeth Westbrooke Spinster John Higham Esquire Percy Bysshe Shelley Esquire Sir Timothy Shelley Baronet and John Westbrooke Esquire—Defendants."

was deserted by her said Husband until a short time previously to the time of her death she lived with the said John Westbrooke her father and that in the month of December last she died and that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley ever since he so deserted his said wife has unlawfully cohabited with the said Mary Godwin and is now unlawfully cohabiting with her and has several illegitimate children by her and your Orators shew that Sir Timothy Shelley Baronet the father of the said Percy Bysshe Shelley did in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifteen concur with the said Percy Bysshe Shelley in making a Settlement of certain Estates belonging to the said Sir Timothy Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley whereby the said Percy Bysshe Shelley became and is now entitled to a yearly rent charge or annuity of One thousand pounds subject to the payment thereof of the yearly sum of Two hundred pounds to the said Harriett Shelley during her life and the said Sir Timothy Shelley contracted to make some provision for your Infant Orators But the nature of such Contract or provision your Orators are unable to set forth And your Orators shew that while your Orators lived with the said John Westbrooke they were supported partly by their said mother and partly by the said John Westbrooke And your Orators shew that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley avows himself to be an Atheist and that since his said Marriage he has written and published a certain work called Queen Mab with notes and other works and that he has therein blasphemously derided the truth of the Christian Revelation and denied the existence of God as the Creator of the Universe And your Orators further shew that since the death of the said Harriett Shelley the said Percy Bysshe Shelley has demanded that your Orators should be delivered up to him and he intends if he can to get possession of their persons and educate them as he thinks proper And your Orators further shew that in order to make some provision for your Orators the said John Westbrooke hath transferred the Sum of two thousand pounds four pounds per Cent bank annuities into the names of the said Elizabeth Westbrooke and of John Higham of Grosvenor Street in the Parish of Saint George Hanover Square Esquire and the same is now standing in their names And an Indenture bearing date the second day of January one thousand eight hundred and seventeen has been duly made between the said John Westbrooke of the first part your Orators Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley of the second part and the said Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham of the third part and the same has been executed by the said John Westbrooke and the said Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham And that by the said Indenture after reciting the said Transfer it was

agreed that they the said Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham and the survivor of them and the executors and administrators of such survivor should thenceforth stand possessed of and interested in the said sum of Two thousand pounds four pounds per Cent Consolidated Bank annuities upon trust for your Orators Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley equally to be divided between them share and share alike and to be paid assigned or transferred to them respectively in manner following (that is to say) one moiety or half part thereof to be paid assigned or transferred to your Orator the said Eliza Ianthe Shelley when she shall attain the age of twenty one years or be married (with the consent in writing of the said John Westbrooke or of such person or persons as he shall by Deed or Will appoint) which shall first happen and the other moiety or half part thereof to be paid assigned or transferred to your Orator Charles Bysshe Shelley when he shall attain the age of twenty years But in case your Orator Eliza Ianthe Shelley shall happen to depart this life under the age of twenty one years and without having been married with such consent as aforesaid or your Orator Charles Bysshe Shelley shall depart this life under the age of twenty one years then and in that case the whole of the said sum of Two thousand pounds Four pounds per cent Consolidated Bank Annuities shall go and be paid to the survivor of your Orators Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley at such time as is mentioned with respect to her or his original moiety of the said trust monies and upon trust and in the meantime and until your Orators Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley or the survivor of them shall become entitled to an absolute vested interest in the said trust monies to pay and apply all or a sufficient part of the Dividends and annual produce of the said trust fund for and towards the maintenance and education of your Orators Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley respectively in such manner as the said Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham or the survivor of them or other trustee or trustees for the time being shall think proper And as to so much of the said Dividends and Annual produce (if any) as shall not be applied for such maintenance and education as aforesaid upon trust to accumulate the same upon the same trusts as are declared concerning the said Sum of Two thousand pounds four pounds per cent Consolidated Bank annuities and without making any distinction in the shares from which such accumulation shall arise And upon further trust that in case your Orators Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley should depart this life before the interest of either of them in the said trust monies should become payable and transferrable under the

trusts before set forth then that the said trustees or other the trustees or trustee for the time being shall stand possessed of and interested in the said trust fund in trust for the said John Westbrooke his executors administrators and assigns to and for his and their own use and benefit absolutely Provided always and it is thereby declared and agreed that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said trustees and the survivor of them or other the trustees or trustee for the time being of the said trust Bank Annuities by and with the consent in writing of the said John Westbrooke if living but if dead then by and of the proper authority of the same trustees respectively to raise any Sum or sums of money by and out of the said trust fund not exceeding in the whole three hundred pounds and to apply the same for the preferment and advancement in the world or other benefit and advantage of the said Charles Bysshe Shelley as they the said trustees or the survivor of them or other the Trustees or Trustee for the time being thereof shall in their or his or her discretion think fit notwithstanding the said Charles Bysshe Shelley shall not then have attained his age of twenty one years And your Orators are desirous that your Orators should not be placed in the custody of the said Percy Bysshe Shelley but that their persons and fortunes should be placed under the protection of this Honorable Court And that the trusts of the said Indenture should be performed and that the Contract made by the said Sir Timothy Shelley for a provision for your Orators should be carried into execution. In consideration whereof and for as much as your Orators can only have adequate relief in the premises in a Court of Equity where matters of this nature are proper recognizable and relievable And to the end that the said Defendants Elizabeth Westbrooke John Higham Percy Bysshe Shelley Sir Timothy Shelley and John Westbrooke and Robert Farthing Beauchamp¹ may upon their several and respective oaths and

¹ Professor Dowden (ii. 78 *note*) mentions Beauchamp as one of the defendants in the case, whether on the ground of this reference to him or of some other evidence is not stated. He does not appear to me to be so characterized here, where his name is tacked on by a second *and* after the list of defendants, as if he were an additional witness whom the Westbrookes desired to get questioned. He was probably a very intimate acquaintance of the Westbrooke family, for Mr. Dowden (i. 142 *note*) records on the autho-

rity of the Rev. W. Esdaile that Beauchamp's name was originally Farthing, that he came of a Somerset family of yeomen, was a London bank clerk, and took the name of Beauchamp under the will of an old lady of that name who fell in love with him and left him all her property. This lucky personage, it seems, married Elizabeth Westbrooke, who on her part, inherited her father's property. Neither on the brief prepared by Shelley's Solicitor, Longdill, for the use of his chief Counsel, Mr. Wetherell,

according to the best of their respective knowledge remembrance information and belief full true direct and perfect answer make to all and singular the matters aforesaid and that as fully and particularly as if the same were here again repeated and they distinctly interrogated thereto

And whether an Indenture [was or] was not duly made and executed by and between such parties and of such date and of such purport and effect as the Indenture hereinbefore mentioned to bear date the 2nd day of January 1817 or made by and between any and what other parties or of any and what other date or to any and what other purport or effect. And whether your Orators are [or are] not desirous that your Orators should not be placed in the custody of the said Defendant but that their persons and fortunes should be placed under the protection of this Honourable Court And that the trusts of the said Indenture should be performed and that the Contract made by the said Sir Timothy Shelley for a provision for your Orators should be carried into execution And that the fortune of your Orators and their persons may be placed under the protection of this Honourable Court and that a proper person or proper persons may be appointed to act as their Guardian or Guardians and that all proper directions may be given for their maintenance and education and that the trusts of the said Indenture may be performed And that if necessary the said sum of Two thousand pounds Four pounds per cent Bank annuities may be transferred into the name of the Accountant General of this Honorable Court Upon the trusts of that Indenture And that all proper directions may be given for carrying into execution the Contract made by the said Sir Timothy Shelley for making a provision for your Infant Orators And that in the meantime the said Percy Bysshe Shelley may be restrained by the Injunction of this Honourable Court from taking possession of the persons of your Orators And that your Orators may have such further or other relief in the premises as the nature of the case may require and to your Lordship shall seem meet.

May it please your Lordship to grant unto your Orators not only His Majesty's Most Gracious Writ of Injunction issuing out of and under the Seal of this Honorable Court to restrain the said Percy Bysshe Shelley from taking possession of the persons of your Orators but also His Majesty's Most Gracious Writ or Writs of subpoena to be directed to them and each and every of them the said Elizabeth

a paper in my possession, from which Professor Dowden drew some interesting particulars, nor on any one of the Chancery papers of which

I here give transcripts, does Beauchamp's name appear as that of a defendant in "Shelley v. Westbrook".

Westbrooke John Higham Sir Timothy Shelley Baronet and John Westbrooke Percy Bysshe Shelley and Robert Farthing Beauchamp thereby commanding them and each and every of them at a certain day and under a certain pain therein to be limited personally to be and appear before your Lordship in this Honourable Court and then and there true direct and perfect answer make to all and singular the premises and further to stand to perform and abide such further order direction and decree therein as to your Lordship shall seem meet

And your Orators shall ever pray &c.

LANCELOT SHADWELL.

AFFIDAVIT OF ELIZABETH WESTBROOKE SWORN
10 JANUARY 1817¹

States That she knows and is well acquainted with the Handwriting of Percy Bysshe Shelley Esq. one of the above named defendants in this cause having frequently seen him write That she hath looked upon certain paper Writings now produced and shewn to her at the time of swearing this her Affidavit and marked respectively 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. That the said Paper Writings are all of the Handwriting of the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley and were respectively addressed by him to Harriett his late Wife deceased the sister of this Deponent That the Female mentioned or referred to in the said Letters marked respectively 2. 4. 6. 9. under the name or designation of "Mary" and in the said other Letters by the Character or description of the Person with whom the said Defendant had connected or associated himself is Mary Godwin in the Pleadings of this Cause named whom the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley in the Lifetime of his said Wife and in or about the middle of the year 1814 took to cohabit with him and hath ever since continued to cohabit and still doth cohabit with That she hath looked upon a certain other paper Writing produced and shewn to this Deponent now at the time of swearing this her Affidavit and marked 10 That the same Paper Writing is of the Handwriting of the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley and was addressed by him to this Deponent since the decease of her said Sister the late Wife of the said Percy Bysshe Shelley That the Person referred to in the said last mentioned Letter As "the Lady whose Union with the said Defendant this Deponent might excusably regard as the cause of her Sisters ruin" is also the said Mary Godwin That she hath looked

¹ These affidavits, of which I copied from Mr. Wetherell's brief. have not seen the originals, are

upon a certain printed Book produced and shewn to this Deponent now at the time of swearing this her Affidavit and marked with the Letter A and entitled "Queen Mab" with notes subjoined thereto and a certain other printed book or Pamphlet marked with the Letter B entitled a Letter to Lord Ellenborough occasioned by the sentence which he passed on Mr. D. I. Eaton as publisher of the 3rd Part of Paines Age of Reason That the said Books marked respectively A B were respectively written and published by the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley as she this Deponent knows she having frequently seen the manuscript of such respective Books in the Handwriting of the said Defendant and having repeatedly seen him engaged in writing the same That the said Printed Books now produced were presented by the said Defendant to his said late Wife the Sister of this Deponent That she hath since the death of her said Sister received several applications from the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley and from Mr. Leigh Hunt on his behalf demanding the said Petitioners to be delivered up to the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley.

FURTHER AFFIDAVIT OF ELIZABETH WESTBROOKE
SWORN 13 JANUARY 1817

States That in the Month of August in the year 1811 the above named Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley married Harriett Westbrooke a Daughter of the above named Defendant John Westbrooke and Sister of this Deponent and the said Petitioners are the only Issue of the said Marriage That after the birth of the said Petitioner Eliza Ianthe Shelley and while the said Harriett Shelley was pregnant with the said Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley he the said Percy Bysshe Shelley deserted his said Wife and as this Deponent hath been informed and verily believes unlawfully cohabited with Mary Godwin in the Pleadings in this Cause named And thereupon the said Harriett Shelley returned to the House of her said Father and took the Petitioner Eliza Ianthe Shelley with her and soon afterwards the Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley was born in the House of the said John Westbrooke and the said Petitioners have since continued and are now in the Custody or under the care and protection of the said John Westbrooke and of this Deponent and from the time the said Harriett Shelley was deserted by her said Husband until a short time previously to her Death she lived with or under the protection of the said John Westbrooke her Father And that in the Month of December last she died That while the said Petitioners lived with or under the care of the said John Westbrooke they were supported partly by their

Mother and partly by the said John Westbrooke and in order to make some Provision for the said Petitioners the said John Westbrooke hath transferred the sum of £2000 4£ per Cent Bank Annuities into the Names of this Deponent and the above named Defendant John Higham upon certain Trusts declared thereof in and by the Indenture dated the 2nd day of January Instant in the Pleadings of this cause mentioned and the same is now standing in their Names.

SHELLEY'S ANSWER, GIVEN 18 JANUARY 1817¹

The Defendant saving and reserving to himself now and at all times hereafter all benefit and advantage of exception that can or may be had or taken to the said Complainants said Bill of Complaint for answer thereto or unto So much thereof as he is advised is in anywise material or necessary for him to make answer unto answers and says he admits that he this Defendant did in the month of August One thousand eight hundred and eleven intermarry with Harriett Westbrooke named in the said Bill in that behalf and that she was the Daughter of the said John Westbrooke and this Defendant saith that the said Complainants are the only Issue of the said marriage and that after the birth of the said Complainant Eliza Ianthe Shelley this Defendant and his said late wife agreed in consequence of certain differences between them to live separate and apart from each other but this Defendant denies that he deserted his said wife otherwise than by separating from her as aforesaid And this Defendant further says he admits that in consequence of such separation the said Harriett Shelley returned to the House of her Father, and took the said Complainant Eliza Ianthe Shelley with her and that the said Complainant Charles Bysshe Shelley was afterwards born at or about the time mentioned in the said Complainants Bill. And this Defendant admits that his said late Wife died at or about the time in the said Bill mentioned in that behalf And this Defendant says that at the urgent entreaty of his said late wife he permitted his said children to reside with her under her management and protection after her separation from this Defendant although this Defendant saith he was very anxious from his affection for his said children to have had them with him under his own care and management during his said Wife's life but that he forbore so to do in compliance with the wishes of his

¹ The formal heading to this paper is "In Chancery. The Answer of Percy Bysshe Shelley one of the Defendants to the Bill of Complaint of Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles

Bysshe Shelley Infants by John Westbrooke their maternal Grandfather and next friend Complainants."

wife and on account of their then tender age intending nevertheless to have them under his own care and to provide for their education himself as soon as they should be of a proper age or in case of the death of his said wife and never having in any manner abandoned or deserted them or had any intention of so doing And this Defendant saith it may be true for anything he knows to the contrary that his said children may since their said mother's death have been and may now be in the custody and under the protection of the said John Westbrooke and his Daughter Elizabeth Westbrooke another Defendant named in the said Complainants Bill but this Defendant saith they have been so against the consent of this Defendant and that they have been clandestinely placed in some place unknown to this Defendant and without his being able to find them or have access to them and he says that since the death of his said wife he hath frequently applied to the said Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Westbrooke and hath requested to have the said Complainants his children delivered up to him in order that this Defendant might enjoy the happiness of their Society and might provide for their maintenance and education but that the said John Westbrooke and Elizabeth Westbrooke have always refused to deliver them up to this Defendant or even to inform this Defendant where they were, and have altogether prevented this Defendant from having any access to them And this Defendant denies that he is unlawfully cohabiting with Mary Godwin in the said Bill named on the contrary he saith that he hath since the death of his said late Wife intermarried with her and that she is his lawful wife And this Defendant denies that Sir Timothy Shelley Baronet in the said Bill named did in the year One thousand eight hundred and fifteen or at any other time concur with this Defendant in making a Settlement to the purport and effect in the said Bill in that behalf mentioned but this Defendant says that this Defendant having an allowance from his Father of Two hundred pounds per annum only up to the month of June One thousand eight hundred and fifteen he became indebted before that time to different persons in several large Sums of money amounting altogether to the Sum of Five thousand pounds and upwards and being pressed for payment of such debts and being totally unable to pay the same or any of them or any part thereof he applied to the said Sir Timothy Shelley upon which this defendant and the said Sir Timothy Shelley came to an arrangement by which the said Sir Timothy Shelley in the said month of June One thousand eight hundred and fifteen advanced this Defendant a considerable Sum of money towards the payment of his debts and also secured to this

Defendant an annuity of One thousand pounds per annum during the joint lives of the said Sir Timothy Shelley and this Defendant by way of Rent charge out of certain Estates belonging to the said Sir Timothy Shelley and this Defendant further says that it may be true for anything he knows to the contrary that while the said Complainants have lived with the said John Westbrooke they may have been supported partly by their mother and partly by the said John Westbrooke but he says that if that hath been the case this Defendant hath contributed to their support for he says on the said Sir Timothy Shelley assisting this Defendant with money and on his allowing him One thousand pounds a year as hereinbefore mentioned he this Defendant immediately wrote to the said Sir Timothy Shelley and requested him to give directions to his Bankers through whom this Defendant received his said Annuity to pay to or to the order of the said Harriett Shelley the annual Sum of Two hundred pounds out of the Sum of One thousand pounds allowed to this Defendant by quarterly payments and which this Defendant says was accordingly done and to the best of this Defendants recollection and belief as to the time the said Harriett Shelley received the first quarterly payment thereof in the month of June One thousand eight hundred and fifteen besides which this Defendant says that he this Defendant desired his Solicitor to pay to the Solicitor of the said Harriett Shelley the full sum of Two hundred pounds to discharge her debts and which he says was paid accordingly to her Solicitor by the Solicitor of this Defendant sometime in the said month of June One thousand eight hundred and fifteen and he says the said annuity of Two hundred pounds was afterwards regularly paid to the said Harriett Shelley or to her order down to the time of her death And this Deponent further says he admits that since the death of the said Harriett Shelley he this Defendant hath demanded that the said Complainants should be delivered up to him and that he intends if he can to get possession of their persons and educate them as he thinks proper which he intends to do virtuously and properly and to provide also for their support and maintenance [in] a manner suitable to their birth and prospects in the world and to the best of his judgment and ability And this Defendant humbly submits and insists that being the father he is also the natural Guardian of his said children and that as it is his duty to provide for their maintenance and education so it is also his right so to do and to have the custody of the persons of his said children as well as the superintendence and management of their education And this Defendant says it may be true for any thing he knows to the contrary that in order to make some provision for the said Complain-

ants sufficient to enable the said John Westbrooke by so doing to contest the just rights of this Defendant as the father and natural Guardian of the said Complainants but not further and as he believes for no other purpose the said John Westbrooke may have transferred the sum of Two thousand pounds four per Cent Bank annuities into the names of the said Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham another Defendant named in the said Bill and that the same may now be standing in their names and that an Indenture may have been duly made and executed by and between such parties and of such date and to such purport and effect as is mentioned in the said Bill to bear date the Second day of January One thousand eight hundred and seventeen but this Defendant is ignorant of the said several last mentioned matters of his own knowledge or otherwise save as they appear by the statement thereof in the said Bill And this Defendant says that the said Complainants are of such tender age that they can not from any reasonable ground of objection on their part be desirous that they should not be placed in the custody of this Defendant not being of sufficient age as this Defendant submits and insists to judge for themselves either as to that or any other circumstance that can affect their future prospects or welfare in life And this Defendant humbly submits and insists that he is exclusively entitled to the custody and care of his said Children and that he ought not to be deprived thereof or to have his just rights as their Father and natural Guardian taken from him or abridged and that the said Complainants ought to be delivered up to him And this Defendant denies all and all manner of unlawful combination and confederacy in and by the Bill charged without this that there is any other matter cause or thing in the Complainants said Bill of Complaint contained material or effectual in the Law for this Defendant to make answer unto and not herein and hereby well and sufficiently answered avoided traversed or denied is true to the knowledge or belief of this Defendant, all which matters and things [he] is ready and willing to aver maintain and prove as this Honourable Court shall direct and humbly prays to be hence dismissed with his reasonable Costs and charges in this behalf most wrongfully sustained

WILLM. HORNE¹

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

¹ One of Shelley's junior Counsel. For the Lord Chancellor's Judgment, stated by Jacob to have been delivered in writing on the 17th of March 1817, see *ante*, pages 183 to 185. Professor Dowden regards this

date as an error of the press for "the 27th of March." I should be slow to adopt this view, as the 27th is the date of the order based upon the judgment; and this order is a voluminous formal paper which

THE LORD CHANCELLOR'S FORMAL ORDER DATED
THURSDAY, 27 MARCH 1817

Whereas the Plaintiffs did on the 10th day of January 1817 prefer their Petition unto the Right Honorable the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain setting forth that in the month of August 1811 the said Percy Bysshe Shelley married Harriett Westbrooke who was the Daughter of the said John Westbrooke and that the Petitioners are the only Issue of the said Marriage and that after the birth of the Petitioner Eliza Ianthe Shelley and while the said Harriett Shelley was pregnant with the Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley the said Percy Bysshe Shelley became acquainted with a Mr. Godwin the Author of a Work called Political Justice and other Works and with Mary Godwin his Daughter and that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley about 3 years ago deserted his said Wife and unlawfully cohabited with the said Mary Godwin and that thereupon the said Harriett Shelley returned to the house of her Father the said John Westbrooke and brought the Petitioner Eliza Ianthe Shelley with her and soon afterwards the Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley was born in the House of the said John Westbrooke and the Petitioners have ever since continued and are now in the custody and under the care and protection of the said John Westbrooke and of his Daughter the said Elizabeth Westbrooke the Sister of the said Harriett Shelley That from the time the said Harriett Shelley was deserted by her said Husband until a short time previously to the time of her death she lived with the said John Westbrooke her Father and that in the month of December last she died and that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley ever since he so deserted his said Wife has unlawfully cohabited with the said Mary Godwin and is now unlawfully cohabiting with her and has several illegitimate Children by her That the said Sir Timothy Shelley the Father of the said Percy Bysshe Shelley did in 1815 concur with the said Percy Bysshe Shelley in making a Settlement of certain Estates belonging to the said Sir Timothy Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley whereby the said Percy Bysshe Shelley became and is now entitled to a yearly Rent charge or Annuity of £1000 subject to the payment thereof of the yearly sum of £200 to the said Harriett Shelley during her life That while the Petitioners lived with the said John Westbrooke they were supported partly by their Mother and partly by the said John

would take some time to prepare, contain any of Lord Eldon's careful
and which moreover does not reasonings.

Westbrooke and the said Percy Bysshe Shelley did not contribute to their support That the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley avows himself to be an Atheist and that he hath since his said Marriage written and published a certain Work called "Queen Mab" with Notes and other Works and that he hath therein blasphemously derided the truth of the Christian Revelation and denied the existence of a God as Creator of the Universe That since the death of the said Harriett Shelley the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley has demanded that the Petitioners should be delivered up to him and that he intends if he can to get possession of their persons and educate them as he thinks proper That in order to make some provision for the Petitioners the said John Westbrooke hath transferred the sum of £2000 £4 per Cent Bank Annuities into the names of the Defendants Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham and that the same is now standing in their names That an Indenture bearing date the 2nd day of January 1817 has been duly made between the said John Westbrooke of the 1st part the Petitioners Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley of the 2nd part and the said Defendants Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham of the 3rd part and that the same has been executed by the Petitioner John Westbrooke and the said Defendants Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham and that by the said Indenture after reciting the said transfer it was agreed that they the said Defendants Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham and the survivor of them and the executors and administrators of such Survivor should stand possessed of and interested in the said sum of £2000 £4 per Cent Consolidated Bank Annuities upon Trust for the Petitioners equally to be divided between them share and share alike and to be paid assigned or transferred to them respectively in manner following that is to say one moiety or half part thereof to be paid assigned or transferred to the Petitioner Eliza Ianthe Shelley when she shall attain the age of 21 years or be married (with the consent in writing of the Petitioner John Westbrooke or of such person as he shall by Deed or Will appoint) which shall first happen and the said moiety or half part thereof to be assigned or transferred to the Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley when he shall attain the age of 21 years but in case the said Petitioner Eliza Ianthe Shelley shall happen to depart this life under the age of 21 years and without having been married with such consent as aforesaid or the Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley shall depart this life under the age of 21 years Then and in that case the whole of the said sum of £2000 £4 per Cent Consolidated Bank Annuities shall go and be paid to the Survivor of the Petitioners Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe

Shelley at such time as is mentioned with respect to her or his original moiety of the said Trust Monies and upon Trust in the mean time and until the Petitioners or the survivor of them shall become entitled to an absolute vested interest in the said Trust monies to pay and apply all or a sufficient part of the dividends and annual produce of the said Trust Fund for and towards the maintenance and education of the Petitioners respectively in such manner as the said Defendants Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham and the survivor of them and other the Trustee or Trustees for the time being shall think proper and as to so much of the said Dividends or Annual produce (if any) as shall not be applied for such maintenance and education as aforesaid upon Trust to accumulate the same upon the same Trusts as are declared concerning the said sum of £2000 £4 per Cent Consolidated Bank Annuities and without making any distinction in the Shares from which such accumulations shall arise And upon further Trust that in case the Petitioners should die before the Interest of either of them in the said Trust monies should become payable and transferrable under the Trusts before set forth then that the said Trustees or the Trustees or Trustee for the time being shall stand possessed of and interested in the said Trust Fund in Trust for the said Defendant John Westbrooke his executors administrators and assigns to and for his and their own use and benefit absolutely Provided always and it is thereby declared and agreed that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Trustees and the survivor of them or other the Trustees or Trustee for the time being of the said Trust Bank Annuities by and with the consent in writing of the said John Westbrooke if living but if dead then by and of the proper authority of the same Trustees respectively to raise any sum of money by and out of the said Trust Fund not exceeding in the whole £300 and to apply the same for the preferment and advancement in the world or other benefit and advantage of the Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley as they the said Trustees or other the Trustees or Trustee for the time being thereof shall in their his or her discretion think fit notwithstanding the Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley shall not then have attained his age of 21 years That the Petitioner Eliza Ianthe Shelley is now of the age of 3 years and a half or thereabouts and the Petitioner Charles Bysshe Shelley is of the age of 2 years or thereabouts That the Petitioners have lately filed their Bill in this Court setting forth the matters aforesaid and praying amongst other things that the Fortunes of the Petitioners and their persons may be placed under the protection of this Court and that a proper person or persons may be appointed to act as their Guardian or Guardians

and that all proper directions may be given for their maintenance and education and that the Trusts of the said Indenture may be performed and that if necessary the said sum of £2000 £4 per Cent Bank Annuities may be transferred into the name of the Accountant General of this Court upon the trusts of that Indenture and that in the mean time the said Percy Bysshe Shelley may be restrained by the Injunction of this Court from taking possession of the persons of the Petitioners Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley And therefore praying that it might be referred to one of the Masters of this Court to appoint the said John Westbrooke and the said Elizabeth Westbrooke or some other proper person or persons to act as the Guardian or Guardians of the Petitioners and to approve of a proper Plan for their maintenance and education and that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley might be restrained by the Injunction of this Court from taking possession of the persons of the Petitioners or either of them Whereupon all parties concerned were ordered to attend His Lordship on the matter of the said Petitioners and Counsel for the Petitioners and for the Defendants this day attending accordingly upon hearing the said Petition an Affidavit of the Defendant Elizabeth Westbrooke another Affidavit of the said Elizabeth Westbrooke an Affidavit of Nathaniel Morphett a Book marked with the Letter (A) a Book marked with the Letter (B) several Letters marked No. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9 and 10 from the Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley to his late Wife Harriett Shelley deceased and to the Defendant Elizabeth Westbrooke an Indenture marked with the Letter C dated the 2nd day of January 1817 and the Answer of the Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley read and what was alleged by the Counsel for the Petitioners and for the Defendants His Lordship doth Order that the Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley and his Agents be restrained from taking possession of the persons of the Plaintiffs Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley the Infants or intermeddling with the said Infants until the further order of this Court And it is Ordered that it be referred to Mr. Alexander one of the Masters of this Court to enquire what will be a proper plan for the maintenance and education of the said Plaintiffs the Infants and also to enquire with whom and under whose care the said Infants should remain during their minority or until the further order of this Court and the said Master is to state the result of the said Enquiries with his opinion thereon to the Court Whereupon such further order shall be made as shall be just and any of the parties are to be at liberty to apply to this Court pending the said enquiries before the Master as there shall be occasion

REPORT OF THE MASTER, MR. ALEXANDER, DATED
1 AUGUST 1817

In Pursuance of an Order bearing date the 27th day of March 1817 made in this Cause on the Petition of the Infant Plaintiffs by which Order it was among other things referred to me to enquire what would be a proper Plan for the maintenance and education of the said Infants and also to enquire with whom and under whose cares they should remain during their minority or until the further Order of this Court I have been attended by the Solicitors for the Plaintiffs and Defendants and have in their presence proceeded in the aforesaid Matters And I find that the Infant Plaintiff Eliza Ianthé Shelley is now of the age of 3 years and upwards and the Infant Plaintiff Charles Bysshe Shelley of the age of 2 years and upwards and that they are the only Children of the Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley by his late Wife Harriett Shelley formerly Harriett Westbrooke Spinster now deceased And I find that the said Infant Plaintiffs are not entitled to any fortune nor have they any provision made for their maintenance other than the Provision made for them by their maternal Grand father the Defendant John Westbrooke in and by the Indenture bearing date the 2nd day of January 1817 in the pleadings in this Cause particularly mentioned under and by virtue of which Indenture the said Infant Plaintiffs are entitled to £2000 Bank £4 per Cent Annuities now standing in the names of the said Defendants Elizabeth Westbrooke and John Higham upon certain Trusts declared by the said Indenture and I Certify that the following Proposals for the education of these Children and for a proper person with whom or under whose care they should have been placed have been laid before me that is to say a Proposal on the behalf of their Father the Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley whereby he proposed that the said Infants should be placed under the care of Pynson Wilmot Longdill of Grays Inn in the County of Middlesex Gentleman Solicitor to the said Defendant and Selina his Wife by whom a Plan for the education of the Infants was also laid before me and a Proposal on the behalf of the said Plaintiffs whereby it was proposed that they the said Plaintiffs should be placed in the Family of the Reverend John Kendall of the Town of Warwick a Clergyman of the Church of England to be brought up under his care until the further order of the Court and that the sum of £200 per Annum should be allowed to the said John Kendall for the education maintenance and support of the said Plaintiffs he having consented to receive them into his

Family provide them with Clothes and every thing necessary to their situation instruct them so far as they were capable of receiving Instructions and take the charge of them in all respects in the place of a Parent for an allowance of the said sum of £200 per Annum such allowance to be paid in manner following that is to say the sum of £80 per Annum part thereof with the dividends to which the said Plaintiffs are entitled from the £2000 Bank £4 per Cent Annuities set apart for their benefit pursuant to the aforesaid Indenture of the 2nd day of January 1817 and the residue of the said annual sum of £200 to be made good by the said John Westbrooke the Maternal Grandfather of the said Plaintiffs And I further Certify that having proceeded to consider the said Proposals the latter of which laid before me on behalf of the said Infants is supported by an Affidavit of the Reverend Samuel Parr of Hatton in the County of Warwick Doctor of Laws made in this Cause on the 6th day of July 1817 by which Affidavit the said Doctor Parr made oath that he knew and was intimately [acquainted] with the said John Kendall who was the Master of the Earl of Leicesters Hospital in the Town of Warwick and Vicar of Budbrook near to the said Town and also with Martha the Wife of the said John Kendall and had so known them for 20 years last past and further that the said John Kendall was of the age of 50 years or thereabouts and the said Martha his Wife of the age of 53 years or thereabout and that the Family of the said John Kendall consisted of 3 Daughters and no other Children which Daughters were of the respective ages of 22 years 20 years and 18 years or thereabout And further that the said John Kendall was of a moral and upright character and a man of good Talents and Learning and that the said Martha the Wife of the said John Kendall was a Lady of high character and amiable manners and that the Daughters of the said John Kendall were all possessed of superior attainments in Literature and further also that in the Judgment and Opinion of him the said Dr. Parr and which Judgment and Opinion was formed from long and intimate knowledge and acquaintance with the parties there could not be a Family better calculated by their Integrity Knowledge and Manners to have the care and education of Children than the said Mr. and Mrs. Kendall and their Daughters And I humbly Certify that in my Opinion the said Infants will have a better chance of receiving such an Education as will contribute to their future welfare and happiness in the Family of the said John Kendall than if they were brought up according to the proposal and under the direction of the said Percy Bysshe Shelley Upon consideration therefore of both Proposals and of the aforesaid Affidavit I approve the proposal laid

before me in the name and on the behalf of the Plaintiffs All which I humbly certify and submit to this Honourable Court¹

WM. ALEXANDER

LORD CHANCELLOR'S FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE
MASTER, DATED MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 1817

His Lordship doth Order that it be referred back to the said Master to receive further proposals as to a proper person with whom and under whose care the Plaintiffs the Infants shall remain during their minority respectively or until the further Order of this Court and also to receive a further proposal or plan for the maintenance and education of the said Infants and the said Master is to state the same with his Opinion thereon to this Court Whereupon such further Order shall be made as shall be just

FURTHER REPORT OF THE MASTER, MR. ALEXANDER,
DATED 28 APRIL 1818

In Pursuance of an Order bearing date the 10th day of November 1817 made in this Cause on two several Petitions of the Infant Plaintiffs and of the Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley their Father I have been attended by the Solicitors for the Plaintiffs and Defendants and have in obedience to the said Order received further proposals as to a proper person with whom and under whose care the Plaintiffs the Infants shall respectively remain during their respective minorities or until the further Order of this Court And I Certify that by one of the said proposals the above named John Westbrooke the Maternal Grand Father and next friend and the above named Defendant Elizabeth Westbrooke the Maternal Aunt of the said Infant Plaintiffs proposed that the said Plaintiffs should be committed to the care and tuition of the Reverend Jacob Cheesborough of Ulcomb in the County of Kent Clerk a Member of Trinity College Cambridge Vicar of Stoke in the County of Chester and resident Officiating Minister of Ulcomb aforesaid and to the care of Marianne his Wife And I further Certify that by the other of the said proposals the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley proposed that the said Infants his Children should be placed in the family and under the care of Thomas Hume

¹ At this point Lord Eldon had to consider petitions from the plaintiffs supporting the Master's report and from Shelley objecting

to the appointment of Kendall. Hence the reference of the case back to the Master.

Esquire of Brent End Lodge at Hanwell in the County of Middlesex Doctor in Medicine a Fellow of the College of Physicians London and Physician to His Majesty's Forces and to His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge and to the care of Caroline Hume the Wife of the said Thomas Hume And I also Certify that in further obedience to the said Order I have received further proposals and Plans for the maintenance and education of the said Infants one of which proposals and plans was submitted to me by the said Jacob Cheesbrough and the other by the said Thomas Hume And it being directed by the said Order that I should state such further proposal or plan with my Opinion thereon to the Court I have in the 1st Schedule to this my Report set forth the particulars of the Plan submitted to me on the part of the said Jacob Cheesbrough and as to the Plan submitted to me on the part of Dr. and Mrs. Hume which I conceive to be in substance as follows that the Boy who is now of the age of 3 years or thereabouts should at the age of 7 be placed at a good School to be instructed in the rudiments of the Classicks in Ancient and Modern history and be prepared for one of the large or Publick Schools whither he should be sent at a proper age from whence if circumstances permitted he should be removed to one of the Universities And that in the choice of Schools Dr. and Mrs. Hume would prefer one under the superintendence of an Orthodox Clergyman of the Church of England And with respect to the Girl now of the age of 5 years or thereabouts that she should be educated at home under the immediate eye of Mrs. Hume who would herself instruct her in History Geography and Literature in general and would have her taught drawing painting music and dancing when she should have a capacity to profit by the necessary instructions and would pay particular attention to her morals and instil into her mind the leading principles of the Established Church and I humbly Certify that I approve of this Plan and I have set forth in the 2nd Schedule to this my report a copy of the Plan itself as laid before me on the part of Dr. and Mrs. Hume Upon consideration of which several matters and of the two first mentioned proposals together with all the evidence which has been laid before me in support of the same respectively I humbly Certify that I approve of the said Thomas Hume and Caroline his Wife as proper persons with whom and under whose care the said Infants the Plaintiffs shall remain during their minorities or until the further order of the Court and as I have already stated of the Plan of education proposed on their part All which I humbly Certify and submit to this Honourable Court

WM. ALEXANDER

THE 1ST SCHEDULE referred to by the foregoing Report containing the particulars of the Plan or proposal laid before me on the part of the Reverend Jacob Cheesbrough in the said Report named for the maintenance and education of the said Infant Plaintiffs viz^t

The said Jacob Cheesbrough proposed in case the said Children should be committed to the care of himself and Mrs. Cheesbrough that the said Children should continually reside in his house and be brought up with his own Children and that he and Mrs. Cheesbrough should take upon themselves the entire care and management of their education and in particular that the said Jacob Cheesbrough should himself instruct the said Plaintiff Charles Bysshe Shelley in all branches of Classical Education to which the said Jacob Cheesbrough had been much accustomed And that the said Mrs. Cheesbrough would personally superintend the education of the said Plaintiff Eliza Ianthe Shelley in all such branches of useful knowledge and polite accomplishments as would be proper for a female of her situation and expectations and that when there should be occasion for the assistance of Masters for the attainment of the superior accomplishments of a polite education such assistance should be procured and afforded to the said Infants in common with the Children of the said Mr. and Mrs. Cheesbrough and in their house and under their own personal superintendence and inspection and that no pains whatever should be spared for perfecting the said Infants in every branch of useful and polite education and that the said Infants should not be exposed to the corruption of immoral companions nor should they on any occasion visit except in the Company either of the said Mr. or Mrs. Cheesbrough and every possible care and pains should be taken both by precept and example to form their habits and manners so as to qualify them for that station in life in which their rank and expectations entitle them to move and above all they should be early and deeply impressed with the importance of the knowledge of divine truth its sanctions and obligations and taught to be sincere Members of the Established Church

W. A.

THE 2ND SCHEDULE referred to by the foregoing Report containing a Copy of the Plan or proposal laid before me on the part of Dr. Thomas Hume in the said Report named for the maintenance and education of the Plaintiffs the Infants viz^t

With respect to the Boy who is now of the age of 3 years or thereabouts it appears to Dr. and Mrs. Hume that it would be advisable

when he arrived at about the age of 7 years to send him to a good School where he might be instructed in the rudiments of Classicks and in ancient and modern history &c. &c. and be prepared for some of the large or public Schools and at a proper age after being suitably prepared at such School Dr. and Mrs. Hume would propose (other circumstances permitting) to place him at one of the Universities In fixing on a first School for him Dr. Hume would be led to look for one under the superintendence of an Orthodox Clergyman of the Church of England though perhaps he would not consider the circumstance of the Head Master being a Clergyman as positively essential if there were other points of high commendation in favor of an Establishment which presented itself to his notice With respect however to placing him at the University or by anticipation pointing out any particular Profession or mode of life for the child it would in Dr. Hume's opinion be premature at present to do so as the prudence of any step must depend on a variety of circumstances which cannot be now foreseen as well as the feelings and habits and manners and intelligence of the Boy which cannot now be prognosticated.

With respect to the Girl who is now of the age of 5 years or thereabouts Dr. and Mrs. Hume propose to have her educated at home under the immediate and constant superintendence and care of Mrs. Hume giving her lessons in History Geography Literature in general and on every proper subject as early as it might appear that her mind was open to receive them The accomplishments of drawing painting music singing and dancing should receive all the attention which they deserve when the Child displayed a capability of receiving the necessary instructions and the more homely employments of fancy work and sewing should not be neglected. Domestic economy too should receive its share of attention In short Dr. and Mrs. Hume feeling that a young mind must be continually occupied would endeavor to keep it occupied by those things which would in some way or other lead to its improvement or to general usefulness. Upon the score of Dress Dr. and Mrs. Hume would if necessary be very positive on the absolute necessity of resisting and disregarding the fashions of the day if they included as they do in their opinion at the present day an apparent abandonment of all feelings of feminine delicacy and decency. Habitual neatness of dress they would require on the most private occasions and an habitual decency of dress on all occasions.

As to the general reading of the Girl at a more advanced age Dr. and Mrs. Hume would as far as their influence extended keep from her perusal all books that tended to shake her faith in any of the

great points of the established religion. They would discountenance the reading of Novels except perhaps some few unexceptionable books of that sort. They would to a certain degree encourage the reading and indeed the studying some of our best Poets but with respect to Pope and some others Dr. Hume would take care that she was furnished with selections only. Of Shakespeare Dr. Hume understands an edition purified from its grossness has been published and this edition he would put into her hand. He believes that an Edition of Hume's History of England has lately been published in which his insidious attacks on religion are omitted and with this Edition Dr. Hume would take care that she was provided.

To the Morals of the Children Dr. and Mrs. Hume would pay particular attention and would make instruction and discipline go hand in hand. They would endeavour strongly to impress upon the Children notions of modesty and self diffidence and to repress every feeling of vanity and self sufficiency. They would endeavour to inculcate in them high notions of the value of a character for truth and personal honor and a thorough detestation of affectation deceitfulness and falsehood. The particular irregularities to which the minds of these Children may be most prone and which perhaps will be very different in each it is so impossible to foresee that it would be worse than useless in the opinion of Dr. and Mrs. Hume to pretend to point out the precise and particular course which ought to be pursued with respect to either of them Speaking of Children in general and particularly of Children whom we never saw it is in the opinion of Dr. and Mrs. Hume idle to predetermine to affix to them any particular character. The great point is in the opinion of Dr. and Mrs. Hume to observe what nature has made them and to perfect them on her plan. The grand duty of a Parent and Guardian towards Children as Dr. and Mrs. Hume conceive is promptly and continually repressing and if possible extirpating every propensity radically vicious in guiding and by gentle means bringing back to the right course every irregular inclination in exciting when it may be necessary a proper spirit of generous rivalry and emulation in not countenancing and indeed in not tolerating any irreverent allusions in matters of religion in being very circumspect (particularly as far as respects Girls) in the books which are permitted to be brought before them in promptly repressing every feeling of vanity and self importance in requiring from them a respectful and deferential manner at all times towards their superiors whether in rank or in age an affable and unaffected manner towards their equals a mild kind and condescending manner towards their Servants and inferiors and

a humane and charitable feeling and manner towards the poor and distressed.

On the subject of religion which though here mentioned so late Dr. and Mrs. Hume think the very first in point of consideration and importance Dr. and Mrs. Hume beg to say that they would bring up the Children in the faith and tenets of the Church of England they would deem it an imperative duty to inculcate on them solemn serious and orthodox notions of religion but at the same time they would be cautious not prematurely to lead their unripe minds to that momentous subject To a Morning and Evening Prayer and thanksgiving and to Grace before and after Meals they would regularly accustom the Children and would take occasion as circumstances might arise to inculcate on them a general religious feeling without bringing to their notice controversial points that might excite doubts which they would be unable to solve and entangle them in difficulties from which they would be unable to extricate themselves. What is clearly revealed Dr. and Mrs. Hume would endeavour to teach them fervently to embrace and what the limited powers of human intellect would not permit them to understand Dr. and Mrs. Hume would endeavour to make them feel it their duty silently to revere A regular attendance at Divine Service on Sundays Dr. and Mrs. Hume would (when the Children arrived at a proper age) consider an indispensable duty.

With respect to the intercourse to be permitted between Mr. Shelley and his Children the Lord Chancellor having as Dr. and Mrs. Hume are informed intimated that he should suspend his judgment as to how far and in what degree he would in this case interfere against parental authority Dr. and Mrs. Hume beg to say that while they had the care of the Children if it should be confided to them they would feel it their bounden duty implicitly to obey the order and directions of the Lord Chancellor with respect to the intercourse and interference of Mr. Shelley with the Children whatever that order and those directions might be.

W. A.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR'S ORDER DATED SATURDAY,
25 JULY 1818

His Lordship doth Order that the Report of the said Master Mr. Alexander dated the 28th day of April 1818 be confirmed and it is Ordered that the said Infants Eliza Ianthe Shelley and Charles Bysshe Shelley be on or before the 20th day of August next placed by the Defendant John Westbrooke under the care of the said Thomas

Hume and Caroline his Wife and there continue during their respective minorities or until the further order of this Court and it is ordered that the interest of the said £2000 Bank £4 per Cent Annuities from time to time as and when the same shall be hereafter received be paid by the said Eliza Westbrooke and John Higham to the said Thomas Hume in part discharge of the annual sum of £200 to be allowed to him for the maintenance and education of the said Infants subject to the further order of this Court and it is Ordered that the said Percy Bysshe Shelley do pay to the said Thomas Hume the sum of £120 annually by quarterly payments until the further order of this Court so as to make up with the said Interest the annual sum of £200 and it is Ordered that the said Defendants John Westbrooke and Elizabeth Westbrooke be at liberty to visit the said Infant Plaintiffs at the house of the said Thomas Hume once in every month and the last named Defendants are to be at liberty to apply to the Court in case they shall be desirous to have other intercourse with the said Infant Plaintiffs and it is Ordered that the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley be at liberty to visit the said Infant Plaintiffs once in every month in the presence of the said Thomas Hume and Caroline his Wife or one of them or if the said Defendant Percy Bysshe Shelley shall prefer it his visits may be in case he proposes to go out of England according to his convenience so that they do not exceed 12 in the course of a year and the said Percy Bysshe Shelley is also to be at liberty to apply to the Court in case he should be desirous to have other intercourse with the said Infant Plaintiffs and it is ordered that the said Defendant Sir Timothy Shelley and his family have such intercourse with the said Infant Plaintiffs as the said Sir Timothy Shelley shall desire and any of the parties are to be at liberty to apply to this Court as there shall be occasion.

IV. AN ANNOTATED LIST OF BOOKS BROUGHT OUT BY THOMAS MEDWIN.

As most of Medwin's publications are more or less connected with the story of Shelley, the bibliographical details of them form a proper appendix to this Life of the Poet. It would not be worth while, however, to compile a list of his fugitive writings, which are mostly unimportant contributions to periodical literature. Even the first book of his with which I have met, the "oriental sketch" called *Oswald and Edwin*, has its Shelley aspect, as will be seen in this appendix. That sketch, in bibliographical parlance, collates thus:—

OSWALD AND EDWIN, | AN ORIENTAL SKETCH. | BY
THOMAS MEDWIN. | ~~~~~ | Despondence hung |
Upon the spirit of his prime. In vain | He sought for cure,
like wasting fire it clung | Against his heart. | (*Dramatic Scenes.*) |
He sought in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank, | Her cradle,
and his sepulchre. | SHELLEY. | ~~~~~ | Geneva, | Printed
by J. J. Paschoud. | Feb., 1820.

Octavo, pp. viii + 55. Half-title "Oswald and Edwin." with blank verso; title with blank verso; Dedication with blank verso; Preface two pp.; Oswald and Edwin, pp. [1]–42, and Notes pp. [43]–55, (blank verso). The dedication to Edward Ellerker Williams records a friendship so intimately associated with Shelley's death that it is well to quote its exact terms:—

"To | E. El. Williams, Esq.^{re} | This Sketch, | as a slight memorial |
of a long | and uninterrupted intimacy, | commenced amid the scenes |
it attempts to revive, | is inscribed by | His Affectionate Friend, |
T. Medwin."

My copy is in the original drab paper boards, the sheets trimmed and the edges curiously sprinkled with blue. In the next item, and throughout this list except where otherwise stated, the details are set down with the examples in my own library before me.

SKETCHES IN HINDOOSTAN | WITH | OTHER POEMS |
BY THOMAS MEDWIN | London | Published by C and J Ollier
Vere Street | Bond Street and Simpkin and Marshall | Sta-
tioners' Court | 1821.

Demy Octavo, pp. iv + 127. Title-page with imprint centred below a long rule at foot of verso, "C. Richards, Printer, 100, St. Martin's-lane,

Charing-cross.”; Contents with blank verso, half-title “The Lion Hunt.” with the epigraphs from Procter and Shelley given on the title-page of *Oswald and Edwin* (blank verso); pp. [3]–127 occupied by *The Lion Hunt* (*Oswald and Edwin*, revised and reprinted), *The Pindarees*, the notes to these poems, and six short pieces,—the verso of p. 127 blank.

Bound in contemporary stamped polished calf (a Grolier pattern) with a rich gilt border, and gilt back and edges. I have not seen a copy in coeval boards.

Shelley wrote in November 1820 to Ollier about the publication of a poem on Indian hunting which Medwin had sent to London. This was doubtless *The Lion Hunt* in the *Sketches in Hindoostan*, a piece which had passed through Shelley’s hands in the Spring of that year, when Medwin sent to him from Geneva the privately printed *Oswald and Edwin*. *The Pindarees* had also passed under Shelley’s critical eye. I feel certain that the Stanzas beginning at page 99 had gone through the same ordeal; and Medwin specifies the revisions in two of the translations,—leaving very little with which Shelley had not had to do.

The Contents of the *Sketches* are set forth thus:—

	PAGE
The Lion Hunt	1
Notes to the Lion Hunt	35
The Pindarees	45
Notes to the Pindarees	83
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.	
Stanzas	99
From the Spanish of Calderon	105
Translation from Dante	110
From the Spanish of Calderon	114
Spring	117
From the Portuguese of Camoens	121

Between the dates marked by the death of Shelley and that of Byron, Medwin, being in Paris, wrote *Ahasuerus, the Wanderer*; and he attributes the undertaking to the advice of Shelley, the influence of *Faust*, *El Magico Prodigioso*, *St. Leon*, and *Manfred*, which last he professes to have read “at least ten times every year.” As will be seen on reference to page 141 (*ante*) the character of Julian in *Ahasuerus* in an attempt to “shadow out” Shelley’s yearning after the ideal, his own language and sentiments being often adopted. The only copy of this curious work known to me is that in the British Museum, from which the title-page and details are given.

AHASUERUS, | THE WANDERER : | A DRAMATIC
 LEGEND, | In Six Parts. | BY THE AUTHOR OF SKETCHES IN
 HINDOOSTAN, AND | OTHER POEMS. | Wherefore is light given
 to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul, | who
 long for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than
 hidden treasure, | who would rejoice exceedingly, and be glad
 if they could find the grave?—Job. | London : | Printed for
 G. and W. B. Whittaker, | Ave Maria Lane. | 1823

Demy octavo, pp. xvi + 112. The first sheet is unsigned, the other seven are B to H in eights. The book is of orthodox construction—half-title, title, dedication, preface, and text. The half-title reads “Ahasuerus, the Wanderer.” On its verso is the imprint “Printed by Thomas Davison, Whitefriars.” The title-page, reading as above, has a blank verso. The dedication, on the third leaf, reads, “To | The Right Hon. Lord Byron, | This Poem | Is Inscribed By | His Friend. | Paris, March 1, 1823.” This also has a blank verso. The preface occupies pp. [vii] to xiii and the fourteenth page is blank. There is a second half-title, “The Wanderer”; on its verso we are informed that “The Scene is laid in an Island of the Ægean Sea; | and the Time Occupied One Year.” The pages throughout the text (112) are head-lined “The Wanderer.” On p. 112 Davison’s imprint is repeated at foot. The statements made in the Preface being proper to this appendix, the composition, which runs thus, is given in full:—

PREFACE.

IN one of the daily rides I was accustomed to take in the spring of 1822, at Pisa, with Lord Byron and Mr. Shelley, a juvenile production of the latter, published without his consent, happened to become the subject of conversation; in the course of which, Lord Byron asked Mr. Shelley why he had prefaced his note on the Wandering Jew, attached to the poem above alluded to, with an assurance that it was accidentally picked up in Lincoln’s-inn-fields; his reply was, “ask M., he best can answer the inquiry.”

Though I perfectly remembered the circumstance of having given the note in question to Mr. Shelley, some fifteen years ago, I had a very vague recollection of what it contained, nor at this distance of time can I trace its origin. Whether it was translated by a German master who at that time attended me, from his own language, or was partly his composition, and partly mine, or what its real history is, I am at this moment entirely ignorant. The discussion, however, and the advice of one of those two friends led to this rash undertaking. That highly gifted person has been unhappily snatched from the

world before his genius and many virtues were sufficiently acknowledged to cast into the shade his errors; and who, if he were yet alive, would perhaps have saved me from this—of appearing before the public in the incapacity of author. A character that bears a strong family likeness to Faust, Cyprian, St. Leon, and Manfred, must necessarily give rise to some of the same incidents, and naturally fall into some of the same reflections. The former of these productions I only know in part; the *Magico Prodigioso*, to which Goethe stands so much indebted, I have often admired; the novel I have not seen for ten years; but the last and greatest of these works I must confess to have read at least ten times every year. Without consulting the craniologists, perhaps some of my readers may decide for themselves that I have the organ of verbal memory strongly developed; if so, I hope they will attribute the blame to nature. On the score of originality I suspect, however, that I am under obligations to more poets than Dante and Calderon. But it is time to refer to the following tradition, legend, or whatever it may be called, upon which this poem, if it deserves the title, is founded.¹

“Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel.” Goaded by never-ending restlessness he roves the globe from pole to pole. He is denied the consolation of the grave!

“Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Carmel! he shook the dust from his beard, and roared in dreadful accents: They could die; but I, reprobate wretch! alas! I cannot die! Dreadful is the judgment that hangs over me! Jerusalem fell! I crush’d the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames—I cursed the Romans! but alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair, and I could not die! Rome, the giantess, fell! I placed myself before the falling statue—she fell, and did not crush me. Nations sprung up, and disappeared before me; but I remained, and did not die. From cloud-encompassed cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me on the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. A forest was on fire: I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood! fire dropped on me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs—alas! it could not consume them.

¹ The extracts which follow are considerably retrenched from Note VI to *Queen Mab* as first privately printed for Shelley in 1813, with the statement that he picked up “dirty and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln’s-Inn Fields,” either the original German work without

a title-page, or the fragment ready rendered into English, or the same fragment in German. The note does not make it clear what Shelley professes to have picked up; but Medwin need not be begrudged the credit of the find.

"I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged into the tempests of the battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul—I roared defiance to the victorious German, but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's flaming sword broke upon my skull—balls hissed in vain upon me: the lightning of the battle glared harmless around my limbs! in vain did the elephant trample me—in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed. The mine big with destruction burst upon me, and hurled me high in the air! I fell upon heaps of smoking limbs, and was only singed. The steel club rebounded from my body. The executioner's hand could not strangle me. The tiger's tooth could not pierce me, nor could the hungry lion of the circus devour me. I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero, thou art a bloodhound! I said to Muly Ishmael, thou art a bloodhound! I said to Christiern, thou art a bloodhound! The tyrants invented cruel torments, but could not destroy me. Ha! not to be able to die! not to be able to die! not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life! Awful Avenger in heaven! hast thou in all thy armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? Then let it thunder upon me! command a hurricane to sweep me to the foot of Carmel; that I may there be extended, may pant, and writhe, and die!"

Such are some of the reflections that darkened the closing scene in the eventful history of the Wanderer!

A work written in the midst of the distractions of a gay metropolis, and that occupied scarcely ten days in the composition, can possess but little merit! of this I am sensible, and at the same time aware that such excuses for its imperfections are worse than no apology.

It is hoped, however, that the first serious attempt of one, the best part of whose life has been passed in other pursuits, may meet with indulgence, if it should not disarm criticism. [*Here ends the Preface.*]

It would have been very difficult to disarm criticism if Medwin had attempted to pass off as his own a variant of that beautiful lyric "When the lamp is shattered," given at pp. 96 and 97. The four eight-lined stanzas forming the perfect composition as we have known it since Mary Shelley included it in the *Posthumous Poems* (1824) by no means shut out the Medwinian version of the previous year from the position of a genuine variant, carried off with other plunder. It should have saved *Ahasuerus* from its almost utter extinction. This draft (if draft it be) is in six separate quatrains, thus:—

When the lamp is shatter'd,
The light in the dust lies dead;
When the cloud is scatter'd
The rainbow's glory is shed.

When the lute is broken
 Sweet tones are remember'd not;
 When the lips have spoken,
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour
 Survive not the lamp and the lute,
 The heart echoes render
 No song when the spirit is mute.

No song, but sad dirges,
 Like the wind through a ruin'd cell,
 Or the mournful surges
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

Thy passions have rock'd thee
 As the storms rock the ravens on high;
 Bright reason has mock'd thee
 Like the sun from the wintry sky.

O love! who bewailest
 The frailty of all things here,
 Why chose you the frailest
 For your cradle, your home, and your bier!*

No single one of the established octave stanzas is wanting in this recension; but one quatrain from the third and one from the fourth are absent. The remaining two quatrains here given leave the poem simpler than the 1824 recension; and, being wholly suitable for the past tense, support and contain the reading *chose* which occurs in the Jane manuscript instead of the *choose* of 1824; but neither *notes* for *tones* in line 6 nor *in* for *through* in line 14 finds any support from this version.

As a poem of 1822 this is divinely apposite to the approaching tragic close; and I incline to the view that Medwin was incapable of such good cookery as would have been involved in its alteration from Mary Shelley's version. I hesitate even to condemn the reading "The heart echoes" for "The heart's echoes," or "the wintry sky" for "a wintry sky," though each has the inferiority associable with immaturity of drafting.

* These stanzas [says Medwin] are by a friend now no more.

Alas! Poor Lycidas!

It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
 Built in the eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
 That laid so low that sacred head of thine.

At page 99 of *Ahasuerus, the Wanderer*, we meet a very old friend, at a familiar ceremonial. Medwin, having got from Trelawny an account of the cremation of the actual Shelley, gives his sham Shelley, Julian, the benefit of it, including the Protean bird which could not be scared away. This time the bird was a curlew, qualified to some extent by the appellation of a "wild sea-bird."

And lo! the silver-wing'd curlew!

That round and round the reeking pyre

In ever-lessening circles flew,

That wild sea-bird was now so tame,

Scarce could they scare it from the fire

Of that funereal flame!

The death of Byron in the following year gave Medwin a glorious chance. The notes of the great man's conversations, against which Trelawny had cautioned his Lordship, were hurried into use without more ado, and materialized in the volume of which the title reads thus:—

JOURNAL | OF THE | CONVERSATIONS | OF |
 LORD BYRON : | NOTED DURING A RESIDENCE WITH
 HIS LORDSHIP | AT PISA, | IN THE YEARS 1821 AND 1822. |
 BY THOMAS MEDWIN, Esq. | of the 24th. Light Dragoons, |
 AUTHOR OF "AHASUERUS THE WANDERER." | London : |
 Printed for Henry Colburn, New Burlington Street. | 1824.

The Conversations of Lord Byron, as the handsome demy quarto volume of 1824 is usually called, was, *vide* the publisher, passed through the press while the author was abroad. It is made up as follows:—half-title, "Journal, | &c." with imprint on verso, "London : | Printed by S. and R. Bentley, Dorset Street"; title-page (verso blank); publisher's "Advertisement" inserted on a single leaf with blank verso immediately after the title; Preface pp. [i] to viii; Contents (sig. b) pp. 1 to 8; the text with a dropped head reading "Conversations | &c." pp. [9] to 284; half-title "Appendix." (verso blank); the Appendix pp. [287] to 345; an Errata list on the unpagged verso of 345; and two unfolio'd pages of Colburn's advertizements, dated Oct. 23, 1824. The text and appendix (signed B to 2 U in fours up to p. 344) have head-lines in roman capitals, "Conversations of" on versos and "Lord Byron" on rectos up to p. 284—"Appendix" on versos and various words proper to the subject on rectos from p. 288 to p. 345, at the foot of which last the Bentley imprint is repeated. The frontispiece is a well-executed copper-plate facsimile of Byron's one-page letter to Hobhouse of the 5th of May 1823, introducing his

"friend Capt. T. Medwin," who is to explain to Hobhouse as member of the Greek Committee, "some plans that he has formed with regard to offering his services to the Greeks." The engraved inscriptions are, at the top "Fac Simile of the Hand Writing of Lord Byron.", at the bottom "Published by Henry Colburn, London, Oct^r. 23, 1824.", and in the right-hand bottom corner "Sid^y. Hall, sculpt^r." Mr. Prothero has printed the text of this letter at pp. 201-3 in Vol. vi. of the *Letters and Journals* (1901), the greater part of pp. 201-2 being occupied by an account of Medwin, perhaps not, in all the circumstances, undeservedly severe. The book is in dark drab paper boards with white end-papers and has a back-label printed on white paper reading (across) "Journal | of the | Conversations | of | Lord | Byron."

In the form of a long foot-note extending from page 248 to page 258 appears Medwin's first memoir of his illustrious cousin. It exemplifies his slovenliness and his determination to hang on to Shelley's coat-tails; but that he was really attached to the poet in his parasitical fashion it leaves no doubt. The note is appended to the following passage:—

"On the occasion of Shelley's melancholy fate I revisited Pisa, and on the day of my arrival learnt that Lord Byron was gone to the sea-shore, to assist in performing the last offices to his friend. We came to a spot marked by an old and withered trunk of a fir-tree; and near it, on the beach, stood a solitary hut covered with reeds. The situation was well calculated for a poet's grave. A few weeks before I had ridden with him and Lord Byron to this very spot, which I afterwards visited more than once."

He goes on to describe the scene, the folk in the foreground, the curlew, and the conversation. It would not be easy to find a more brazen attempt to delude the reader into the belief that the writer took part in a ceremonial for which he was too late!

At pp. 212-15 is a nasty tale about Lady Caroline Lamb, with Byron's eight lines of verse "Remember thee," &c.; and at pp. 222-5 is more about her semi-lunatic ladyship and her Byronic novel *Glenarvon*; all of which was reprinted *verbatim* on pp. 325-31 and pp. 341-7 of the second (or first octavo) edition of the book, printed in the same year, an issue which is not very easy to procure. Its exact bibliographic particulars are as follows:—

CONVERSATIONS | OF | LORD BYRON : | NOTED |
DURING A RESIDENCE WITH HIS LORDSHIP | AT PISA, | IN
THE YEARS 1821 AND 1822. | BY THOMAS MEDWIN, Esq. |
of the 24th Light Dragoons, | AUTHOR OF "AHASUERUS THE
WANDERER." | Second Edition. | London : | printed for
Henry Colburn, | New Burlington Street. | 1824.

Demy octavo, pp. xxvi + 542. Half-title, p. i; imprint, p. ii; title-page, p. iii; blank, p. iv; advertizement, p. v; blank, p. vi; preface, pp. vii-x; contents, pp. xi-xxv; blank, p. xxvi; *Conversations &c.*, pp. 1-439; blank, p. 440; sub-title to appendix, p. 441; blank, p. 442; appendix, pp. 443-541; errata, p. 542.

Appendix : *Copia del Rapporto, &c.*, pp. 443-7; *Secondo Rapporto*, pp. 448-9; Goethe's *Beitrag zum Andenken Lord Byron's*, pp. 450-7; letter of Lord Byron to M. H. Beyle, 458-60; *Some Account of Lord Byron's residence in Greece*, pp. 461-507; *Mr. Fletcher's Account of Lord Byron's Last Moments*, pp. 508-23; *Greek Proclamation*, pp. 524-5; translation, pp. 526-7; *Last Moments (resumed)*, pp. 527-30; *Funeral Oration*, pp. 531-9; *Ode to the Memory of Lord Byron, in Greek*, p. 540; translation, p. 541.

Facing the title-page is the facsimile of Lord Byron's hand-writing, folded. Like the quarto, the book was put up in boards; but these were bluish-grey with a drab back-strip and white end-papers. The printed label reads "*Conversations | of | Lord | Byron.*"

The wretched woman who had done so much to go down to posterity disgraced and contemned, felt keenly the outrageous disclosures which Medwin had made, though without inserting her name, and wrote him one of the strangest and most piteous letters that ever one shameless sinner wrote to another. Whether he ever got it I know not; but Colburn did, and preserved a copy of it; from which it has now been published in association with Byron's Works. Let us do Medwin, the most ungallant of gallant captains, the grace to assume that it was at his instance or with his consent that, he being on the Continent, an edition superseding the first and second came forth the same year without those hateful passages: the bibliography of this is as follows:—

CONVERSATIONS | OF | LORD BYRON : | NOTED |
DURING A RESIDENCE WITH HIS LORDSHIP | AT PISA, | IN
THE YEARS 1821 AND 1822. | BY THOMAS MEDWIN, Esq. |
of the 24th Light Dragoons, | AUTHOR OF "*AHASUERUS THE
WANDERER.*" | A New Edition. | London : | Printed for Henry
Colburn, | New Burlington Street. | 1824.

Demy octavo, Half-title, "*Conversations, | &c.*" with Bentley's imprint on verso; title-page with blank verso; Preface 4 pp.; Contents 13 pp.; *Conversations* 351 pp.; Half-title, "*Appendix.*" with blank verso; Appendix 101 pp. numbered in roman figures; and advertizements 1 p. The facsimile letter, printed from the quarto copper-plate but on thin paper and folded in three was at first used as a frontispiece in this revised octavo issue; but later on it was inserted

opposite p. 1, to make way for an excellent print "Engraved by R. Cooper from a Bust by Bertolini [*sic*] of Florence, | made from life at Pisa in 1822." The print is said at the foot to have been "Published by Henry Colburn, London, November 25, 1824." In some copies the half-title is preceded by a leaf consisting of 2 pp. of announcements of works in the press. Of my copies, that issued before the portrait has this leaf, and that containing the portrait has not. The boarding and labelling is as described for the "Second Edition."

With the editions of 1824 published, respectively, in Paris and New York, there is no occasion to deal; nor with the French and German translations issued the same year or the notes selected from Medwin to illustrate an Italian translation of Byron's Works, side by side with Moore's and others. The chances are that the whole gang of piratical publishers took care to maintain all the most peccant matter; but

Non ragioniam di lor ma guarda e passa.

It is to the negative credit, at all events, of the original culprit, that he did not use the opportunity afforded in the next year of restoring the cancelled passages to their place in the pretty edition then issued, which is not a mere reprint. The 1825 *Conversations* was divided into two foolscap octavo volumes. The title-pages read exactly as that of the demy octavo, without mention of there being two volumes. After "a new edition" is the line "VOL. I. [II.]"; and the date is of course altered to 1825.

Each volume has a half-title, "Conversations | of | Lord Byron. | Vol. I. [II.]" with an advertizement on the verso, "Lately Published, | Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord | Byron; | With Anecdotes of some of his Contemporaries. | By the Author of the Memoirs of Lady Hamilton, 2d Edition, 8vo. | With a fine Portrait, after Harlowe. 14s."

Vol. I. consists of pp. xx + 256 including blanks, with the Bartolini portrait as frontispiece: Vol. II. of pp. xii + 272 with the facsimile, folded in six, as frontispiece.

The two little volumes, like the demy octavos, are in bluish-grey paper boards with drab back-strips and white end-papers, and have white back-labels reading, across, "Conversations | of | Lord | Byron. | Vol. I [II.]"

There must have been more of this edition than the public wanted; for in 1832 the greater part of its component sheets was made up in one volume and reissued as "Two volumes in one, complete," with a brownish-purple cloth cover. The book ends with page 154 of the second volume, the Appendix of 117 pages being left out. The London publishers were Colburn and Bentley, the Edinburgh Bell

and Bradfute; and Cumming did the honours in Dublin. These remainder copies do not often turn up now.

The reason for the exclusion of the Appendix is not difficult to divine. A certain sad dog had "returned to his vomit." Medwin was now once more in London; and it would square with his egregious vanity if he thought the time suitable for cutting out the serviceable appendix supplied in his absence by the personage whom Henry Colburn described as "the London editor." The "vomit" he had returned to specifically in 1832 was the brief life of Shelley which he had treated so badly in the long foot-note of the *Conversations*, and was tinkering at and lengthening out, amending somewhat, no doubt, for *The Athenæum*, in which paper the Memoir and most of the other component parts of *The Shelley Papers* appeared in 1832. To that year belong also the two translations from Æschylus which have the strongest claim to be viewed as having been influenced by Shelley, *Prometheus Bound* and *Agamemnon*, both of which, moreover, are similar in appearance and get-up to *Hellas*. The title-page and collation of the first-named are —

PROMETHEUS BOUND, | A TRAGEDY, | TRANSLATED FROM |
THE GREEK OF ÆSCHYLUS, | INTO ENGLISH VERSE | BY
THOMAS MEDWIN, Esq. | AUTHOR OF "THE CONVERSATIONS
OF LORD BYRON." | London: | William Pickering. | 1832.

Octavo, pp. viii + 70. Title with imprint ("Printed by Charles Whittingham, | Tooks Court, Chancery-Lane.") centred at foot of verso, Preface four pp., Argument two pp., Dramatis Personæ (an unpagéd leaf signed B with blank verso), the Tragedy pp. [7] to 62, Notes pp. [63] to 74, and an unpagéd leaf with the imprint "Charles Whittingham, Tooks Court, | Chancery Lane." in the centre of the recto (verso blank). The Arabic numerals 1 to 4 are not represented. Between the Argument and Dramatis Personæ is a two-line Errata slip.

The orthodox drab wrapper has white end-papers and a printed label on the recto cover reading "Prometheus Bound, | translated from | the Greek of Æschylus, | By | T. Medwin, Esq."

The copy described bears inside the recto cover the inscription "T: J: Hogg | from the | Translator." This is in Hogg's handwriting. Another copy, identical with it in all respects, is inscribed on the verso of the fly-leaf, by Medwin, "Tuesday Oct 9. 1832. | With the | Author's best | Compts."

The Preface explains Medwin's "object in making a version of these plays" and mentions specially the *Agamemnon*, to which there

is no separate Preface, and whereof the title and collation are—

AGAMEMNON, | A TRAGEDY, | TRANSLATED FROM | THE GREEK
OF ÆSCHYLUS, | INTO ENGLISH VERSE | BY THOMAS
MEDWIN, ESQ. | AUTHOR OF "THE CONVERSATIONS OF
LORD BYRON." | London: | William Pickering. | 1832.

Octavo, pp. viii + 90. Half-title "Agamemnon, A Tragedy." with blank verso, title with imprint ("Printed by Charles Whittingham, | Took's Court, Chancery Lane.") centred at foot of verso, Argument two pp., Dramatis Personæ (an unpagéd leaf signed B with blank verso), The Tragedy pp. [3] to 78, Notes pp. [79] to 90, with the printer's two-line imprint repeated at the foot of p. 90.

The drab wrapper with white end-papers bears a printed label on the recto cover reading "Agamemnon, | translated from | the Greek of Æschylus, | By | T. Medwin, Esq."

Some copies of the *Agamemnon* contain a slip bearing nine lines of Corrigenda. Hogg's copy, here described, is one of these. Inside the recto cover it is inscribed in Hogg's writing "T: J: Hogg from the | Translator."

As far as I am aware these were the only two of the Æschylean Tragedies which Medwin published in book form. They were again printed as contributions to *Fraser's Magazine*, in which publication appeared at intervals other four of the seven extant Tragedies of the Athenian giant. The dates of the *Fraser* numbers containing the several plays are—

November 1832, The Chœphori;
January 1833, The Persians;
April 1833, The Seven before Thebes;
May 1834, The Eumenides;
August 1837, Prometheus Bound;
November 1838, Agamemnon.

As regards *The Suppliants* see p. 243 *ante*.

Of the *Shelley Papers* reprinted from *The Athenæum* the title-page and collation are as follows:—

The Shelley Papers | MEMOIR | OF | PERCY BYSSHE
SHELLEY | BY T. MEDWIN, ESQ. | AND | ORIGINAL
POEMS AND PAPERS | BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. |
Now first collected. | London: | Whittaker, Treacher, & Co. |
1833.

Pott octavo, pp. viii + 180. Title p. [i]; "advertisement" p. [iii]; lines by Beddoes p. [v]; contents pp. [vii]–viii; memoir pp. [1]–106; half-title "Poems and Papers | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley"; text of

Poems pp. [109]–126 ; text of papers pp. 127–180. There are three pp. of advertizements.

Bound in blue-gray paper boards with drab back and white label, reading (across) “Shelley | Papers. | 3s. 6d.” White end-papers.

Copies done up in a different manner also occur. The sheets of these are very slightly trimmed, so as to form a neater volume than those of the first issue, but still a volume of which both the head and the fore-edges need cutting open. These later copies are done up in warm-drab paper boards (without a back-strip), and have white end-papers and back-label as in the first copies.

A remainder in quires was found some forty or fifty years after publication. My old publisher-friend William Reeves, of Reeves and Turner, bought them and had them done up in rather poor half-leather with the edges closely trimmed, and sold them at a very low “remainder price.” I have not seen one of these for years.

Faithful to the tradition of dragging in Shelley whenever he made a public appearance, Medwin was in labour the next year with that strange hotch-potch *The Angler in Wales*, over which he appears to have lost his temper with printers and publishers. The following undated letter to James Ollier, at Bentley’s, was posted on the 12th of June 1834.

My dear Sir—It is quite dreadful this delay in the printing—I have only had one sheet this Week.—Is it ever intended that this Book is to get thro the press—?—When the present matter is printed, I mean to write day by day just as much as they can print—but shall not put pen to paper till then. O God how sick I am of the Angler in Wales.—

Yours truly

T. MEDWIN.

The cause of this ebullition collates thus:—

THE | ANGLER IN WALES, | OR | DAYS AND NIGHTS OF
SPORTSMEN. | BY THOMAS MEDWIN, Esq. | late of the First
Life Guards, | AUTHOR OF “THE CONVERSATIONS OF
LORD BYRON.” | Si quid est in libellis meis quod placeat,
dictavi audita. | In Two Volumes. | Vol. I. [Vol. II.] | [Vignette] |
London : | Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, | Publisher
in Ordinary to His Majesty. | 1834.

In this demy octavo, Vol. I consists of pp. xvi+336, Vol. II of pp. viii+348. Each Volume has an engraved frontispiece on plate-paper inserted ; and there are fifteen woodcut vignettes printed with the text, including those in the title-pages.

VOL. I.—The first sheet, unsigned, consists of title-page with imprint centred at foot of verso, “London: | Printed by Samuel Bentley, | Dorset Street, Fleet Street.”—Dedication with blank verso ;

Preface pp. [v]-x; Contents pp. [xi]-xv; list of Illustrations for both volumes p. [xvi]; text pp. [1]-336. Bentley's imprint repeated at foot of 336. Sig. B-Y in eights.

VOL. II.—Preliminary matter half a sheet unsigned, viz.—title with imprint on verso; Contents pp. [iii]-vii (verso of vii blank); text pp. [1]-348. Sig. B-Z 6 in eights. On the last page seven lines of errata for both volumes, and Bentley's imprint at foot.

The volumes are in drab boards with white end-papers and labels reading across "The | Angler | in | Wales, | By | Capt. Medwin. | In Two Volumes. | Vol. I [II.] "

The book is a curious mixture of fiction and fact. One gathers that Medwin's description of a lion hunt in *Sketches in Hindoostan* was taken from a letter written to him by Edward Williams, who, and not Medwin, seems to have witnessed the hunt (p. 260, Vol. I, of *The Angler*); and many such facts are developed in the conversations of fictitious characters. One of these characters gives another a copy of Shelley's Italian Song *Buona Notte*, which thus appeared in print for the first time (I believe), in Vol. I, p. 277. At pp. 24 to 26 of Vol. I is the well-known story of Rogers and Byron's bull-dog, with the observation that the brute in question seldom wagged his tail at any one but Shelley; and we gather that the anecdote had previously appeared ("a few months ago") in "a defunct periodical with an unintelligible name," and that only eight copies of the number were sold. In Vol. II, at pp. 219-20, we have the first issue of Shelley's *Matilda Gathering Flowers*, translated from the *Purgatorio*, and at pp. 192-3 the prose note on the Bacchus and Ampelus group. The fact that one of the *Angler* personages is represented as repeating Shelley's remarks made during a walk in the Uffizzi, and calling this note a "glorious burst of enthusiasm as he stood entranced before this celebrated group," probably accounts for the suspicious phrase "Look! the figures are walking" with which Medwin makes the note open both in *The Angler* and in the *Life*. He probably interpolated *Look!* to give the conversational touch wanted for the semi-fiction, and forgot to strike it out when he gave the same note in the *Life* as "written in pencil and thrown off in the gallery, in a burst of enthusiasm." When I rejected the word in reprinting the note (*Prose Works*, Vol. III, pp. 56-58), I omitted to record its earlier appearance in *The Angler*; but, had I referred to the book, I should certainly have given the foregoing as an almost conclusive reason for regarding *Look!* as apocryphal. The work contains a great deal about the Byron and Shelley pistol-shooting business, Claire, Allegra, the mysterious fair one at Naples, &c. &c., which was afterwards

transferred to the *Life* with variations. The story of Shelley laughing over the *Quarterly Review* article on *Laon and Cythna*, as told in Vol. II of *The Angler*, p. 190, is instructively unlike the same story as told in the *Life*; see *ante*, p. 225. It should be noted that, at pp. 100–102 of Vol. II, are some stanzas, evidently the “elegant stanzas on Tivoli” which Shelley said he had “read with pleasure” when writing to Medwin on the 22nd of August 1821 (*Prose Works*, Vol. IV, p. 232): I had not found them when editing the letter.

It is necessary to introduce here some details of a periodical which I believe to be practically unknown:—

THE | NEW ANTI-JACOBIN: | A MONTHLY MAGAZINE |
OF | POLITICS, COMMERCE, SCIENCE, LITERATURE, ART, MUSIC,
AND THE DRAMA. | No. II. May, 1833. Vol. I.

This is evidently the “defunct periodical” of the narrator in *The Angler*, who professes to have sent to its editors the bull-dog story. There, at page 217, the number “begins to make an ending” under the heading “Bigarrures”; and the first item, sub-headed “The Bard at Bay,” is the tale of Byron, Rogers, and the bull-dog. I bought this number in 1904 as containing a poem by Shelley which purported to be there published for the first time all but a few lines. *Lines Written in the Cascine at Pisa* is the title here given to the exquisite couplets which we now know as *To Jane—The Invitation*, and which from 1824 to 1839 were known very imperfectly in the *Posthumous Poems*, as a portion of a poem made up by Mary Shelley from *The Invitation* and *The Recollection* and called *The Pine Forest of the Cascine, near Pisa*. This advance towards a perfect text of one of the two poems was a good service of Medwin’s—it can hardly be doubted that it was one of his contributions—for there are others of the same parentage, or foster-parentage in the magazine. An article headed “Goethe and his *Faust*” contains a good deal that we have here in the *Life* at pp. 161 and 382–5. This paper on Goethe ends with a specimen of a translation of *Faust*, 6½ pp. by no means ill done, and probably the work of the translator of *Æschylus*. It is followed by a short paper headed “The Connoisseur” in which Medwin certainly had a hand, for it consists of two notes on ancient sculptures whereof the first is a variant of Shelley’s note on the Laocoön group and the other a somewhat similar attempt to interpret or comment the Dying Gladiator, as the statue now, I believe, usually called the Dying Gaul, was then named. Seeing that Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. had lent their name to *The New Anti-Jacobin*, I made certain enquiries of them, and learned that, according to their records, they received for sale in 1833 copies of No. 1 and No. 2, and sent the remaining stock in May 1834 to

J. Winston, Esq., at the Garrick Club. The publishers have no copy of the work or any information about the contributors. There can be no doubt, however, that this is Medwin's defunct periodical; and that, for the present, is all we know "and all we need to know."

The next book on my Medwin list, I do not possess or particularly desire. It is a novel in three duodecimo volumes,—from the British Museum copy of which the following particulars are given.

LADY SINGLETON; | OR, | THE WORLD AS IT IS. | BY |
 THOMAS MEDWIN, Esq. | AUTHOR OF "CONVERSATIONS
 OF LORD BYRON," &c. &c. | A woman's favour, the delight
 of love, | To set to auction, like the meanest wares, | And
 barter at the vilest price. Love is | The only thing upon this
 round of earth, | That tolerates no purchaser but itself; |
 Love is the price, the pureless [*sic*] price of love! | 'Tis the
 inestimable diamond | That must be given away, or unenjoyed. |
 Buried for ever, like to that great merchant, | Who, unseduced
 by all Rialto's gold, | And as in mockery of monarchs, threw |
 Back to the miser-deep his treasured pearls, | Too proud to
 part with them below their worth. | Author's translation from
 Schiller. | Vol. I. [II. III.] | London: | Cunningham & Mortimer,
 Adelaide-Street, | Trafalgar Square. | MDCCCXLIII. |

Vol. I

Half-title with blank verso, title-page with imprint on verso

Preface, pages i-ii, Text pp. 282

B-M pages 1-264

N „ 265-276

O „ 277-282

Vol. II

Half-title and title as in Vol. I. Text, pp. 276

A pages 1-4

B-M „ 5-268

N „ 269-276

Vol. III

Half-title and title as in Vol. I and II. Text pp. 254

A pages 1-4

B-L „ 5-244

M „ 245-254

The *Don Juan* stanzas which come next in order of date confer on Medwin the distinction of saving from oblivion an experiment in metre which but for him might, ostensibly, have perished:—

SOME | REJECTED STANZAS | OF | "DON JUAN," |
 WITH | BYRON'S OWN CURIOUS NOTES. | THE WHOLE
 WRITTEN IN DOUBLE RHYMES, AFTER CASTI'S MAN-
 NER, AN ITALIAN AUTHOR FROM WHOM BYRON IS SAID TO | HAVE
 PLAGIARIZED MANY OF HIS BEAUTIES. | FROM AN UNPUB-
 LISHED MANUSCRIPT | IN THE POSSESSION OF | CAPTAIN
 MEDWIN. | a very limited number printed. | Great Totham,
 Essex : | printed at | Charles Clark's Private Press. | 1845.

Pott quarto, printed on one side (recto) only of the paper ; title-
 page, 5 pp. of verse and 2 of prose, a blank leaf at each end, the whole
 stabbed together, and enclosed in a cream-coloured paper wrapper on
 the first recto page of which lines 1 to 12 of the title-page are repeated
 in red within an oval. The first page (unnumbered) has the heading
 —SUPPRESSED STANZAS OF | "DON JUAN." At the foot of the
 second page of the "Notes" is the single-line imprint in italics
Great Totham : Printed at Charles Clark's Private Press.

I have seen one other copy without the wrapper, but never one
 with it.

THE LIFE | OF | PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. | BY
 THOMAS MEDWIN. | In two Volumes. | Vol. I. [II.] | London : |
 Thomas Cautley Newby, | 72, Mortimer Street, Cavendish
 Square. | 1847.

Large 12mo. Volume I. pp. xii + 384 ; Volume II. pp. iv + 368.

The first volume consists of title-page with imprint centred on verso
 ("London : | Printed by G. Lilley, 148, Holborn Bars"), Preface
 pp. [iii]–ix, Sonnet from Herwegh p. [x], written under Dryden's
 Epigram "Three Poets" &c. p. [xi], "Thou wert the morning-star"
 &c., and "Tu vivens" &c. p. [xii], Life and Appendix 384 pp. and
 a single-leaf list of Errata. A folding facsimile of a quarto letter from
 Shelley (1 p.) forms the frontispiece.

The second volume consists of title-page with imprint on verso as
 in the first, a single-leaf list of Errata, and Life and Appendix
 368 pp.

Lilley's imprint is repeated at the foot of the last page of each
 volume.

The collation by signatures (apart from the preliminary matter in
 each volume, which bears none) is, for Vol. I. B–S in 12s, for Vol. II.
 B–R 4 in 12s.

The signatures in Vol. I pass from M to O, no Sig. N having been
 printed ; but the paging is all right.

In blue-gray paper boards with printed back-labels reading "The
 Life | of | Shelley. | By T. Medwin. | In Two Vols. | Vol. I. [II.]"

the edges absolutely untrimmed so that the extreme measurement is 8×5 inches.

Inserted in this copy are, in Vol. I, a leaf from *Notes and Queries* bearing a rather malicious note on Medwin's family affairs signed "F. Chance," the original German Sonnet by Herwegh in the handwriting of John H. Ingram, and a letter from Medwin to his publisher; and in Vol. II a long and interesting letter from Trelawny to Claire Clairmont mentioning the death of Medwin and recording the opinion that he was honest and consistent in his admiration of the poet.

Another copy in my library is in the usual crimson cloth covers of the publisher, which are blind-blocked both on the sides and on the back but lettered in gilt, "Life | of | Shelley | I. [II.] | T. C. Newby | London". The end-papers are pale primrose-colour, glazed, and the edges smoothed in front and trimmed at the foot. In this copy are inserted (in Vol. I.) a six-page letter from Mary Shelley, deprecating "the publication of particulars injurious to the living," and (at the end of Vol. II.) a leaf on which are printed the same labels that appear on the copy already described. The leaves measure $7\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{16}$ inches.

No full description is needed in the case of the author's own copy of the *Life* copiously revised in his autograph throughout, for a second edition which was supposed to be about to appear at the time of his death in August 1869, and which now at length appears. The volumes are but little trimmed and are in the usual crimson cloth covers as already described, save that the publisher's name does not appear on the backs. That the veteran author spent much labour in the endeavour to apply the further knowledge acquired in twenty-two years to the revision of the work by which he will be best known to posterity, no one who knows the original two volumes and now peruses this book will fail to perceive. A specimen of his late labour faces this page.

While living at Heidelberg Medwin issued two private prints:—

NUGÆ | BY | THOMAS MEDWIN. | Why you have published
is a Poser, | Your Book's too little for the Grocer ! | Heidelberg
1856. | J. S. Wolff.

Sextodecimo, pp. vi + 96 (3 leaves and sig. 1 to 6 in 8's). Title-page with blank verso, "Index" 4 pp., and text 96 pp. Plain drab wrapper, edges trimmed, size $5\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{16}$ in., so evidently not folded 8vo and probably worked to fold in $\frac{1}{2}$ sheets and make 16mo. Errors corrected by pasting on printed slips, at times of one word only.

Another copy precisely similar; but inscribed outside the wrapper "W. I. P. Shortt from | Capt. Medwin | Heidelberg" and then in

Shelley was now enfranchised from his mahomedan
 ties - but according to the Author of the Partis in the Review
 des deux mondes - ~~not~~ to quote his words - neither himself
 or his mistress thought of cementing their union by marriage;
 but it was the destiny of this young of that State to be twice
 wedded - & for here he adds to say he decided a second
 hymen - There the reviewer was mistaken. It was not his
 father but
 LORD BYRON

LIFE OF SHELLEY.

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Let us turn to more cheering contemplations :

With a view of in some degree renovating his health, which had suffered from intense study, his strict Pythagorean system of diet, that by no means agreed with his constitution, and the

immoderate use of laudanum, in which he sought for an opiate to his harassed feelings, and in the hope, by the distraction of new scenes, to dull their irritability, on the 28th of July 1814, Shelley, as

appears by the second volume of the Posthumous Works, left London, accompanied by (the present Mrs. Shelley) the daughter of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, and another lady. With that

contempt of danger from an element ever his delight, which characterised him, he embarked with them in an open boat from Dover, and not without exposure to a gale of wind on the passage, succeeded in reaching Calais, and thence proceeded to Paris. There, after remaining a week, they resolved to walk through France.

He went to the Marché des Herbes, purchased an ass, and thus pilgrimaging, the gipsy

*Facsimile of page 213 in Vol. II of Medwin's revised
copy of the first edition*

a different ink but the same hand (no doubt Captain Shortt's) "dec. Aug. 69. ætat. 81". On the title, above "By", Medwin has written in capitals EDITED. Captain Shortt is described in a foot-note at p. 48 of Medwin's *Odds and Ends* as "an excellent scholar and antiquarian."

ODDS AND ENDS | BY | THOMAS MEDWIN. | J'aime
l'allure poetique à sauts | et en gambardes. | Montaigne. |
Heidelberg 1862 | J. S. Wolff.

Crown octavo, pp. ii + 118. Title-page with blank verso, "Ad Auctorem" (12 lines of Latin elegiacs) with blank verso, and 116 pp. of text. Plain buff wrapper, edges trimmed.

At the top of the title-page is a dated autograph, "Pilfold Medwin | 20th June 1863." In the lower margins of pp. 98 and 99 are Latin and English epigrams in the writing of Thomas Medwin; and after "The End" on p. 118 are six lines in his autograph,—Latin elegiacs headed "In Matris Cenotaphium".

I have another copy with the edges untrimmed, without any additional verses in MS., but with Medwin's certificate in the top margin of the title, "*Unpublished* | 90 Copies printed," and, below his name on the title, the words "dec. Aug. 69 ætat. 81—Horsham Sussexia" in the writing of Captain Shortt, to whom this copy belonged. On the verso of the title Medwin has written "To | Cap^t Shortt | from his friend, the Author | Heidelberg | 17th May 1862".

CORRIGENDA

p. 166, l. 13 from foot, *for* Hemstrins *read* Hemstruis

p. 243, note, line 1 of right hand column, *for* *Faser* *read* *Fraser*

p. 352, l. 6 from foot, *after* Cardon's *insert* [*sic*]

IN the following Index the references to the foot-notes are distinguished from those to the text by being made in italic numerals. . Where the spelling of proper names &c. differs from that of Medwin, it may be taken that the Index is correct.

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